

# KEARNS RESILIENCE + INFRASTRUCTURE

*a supplemental element of the 2020 Kearns General Plan*



Prepared for Kearns Metro Township 2021



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Joy Nelson (Vice-Chair)  
Nathan Bush  
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## Kearns Metro Township Council

Kelly Bush (Chair/Mayor)  
Tina Snow (Vice Chair/Deputy Mayor)  
Chrystal Butterfield (Council Member)  
Al Peterson (Council Member)  
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## Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District

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Brian Hartsell (Associate General Manager)  
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## All Participating Members of the Public

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Overview:** This Element stems from a recognition of the need to more holistically analyze and plan for municipal infrastructure systems, public health, hazards, long-term economic / social / environmental changes, and community resiliency. While this Element was originally intended to be included in the 2020 General Plan, staff and members of the General Plan Steering Committee (GPSC) found that it deserved more consideration than would have been possible on an October 2020 adoption schedule. This Element is now proposed as a supplemental Chapter to the adopted General Plan. It stands as one of the first of its kind in Utah. We hope that this Element will serve as a regional model for community infrastructure and resiliency planning. The Resilience + Infrastructure Element is divided into six sections:

**Introduction:** This first section outlines the framework used throughout the Element. Most importantly, it explains the inclusion of social and digital infrastructure as well as brick-and-mortar infrastructure in discussion. The section also establishes what is meant by resiliency in the Element. In addition to providing the framework, the Introduction section outlines basic existing conditions in Kearns such as existing plans that influence community infrastructure and resilience, climate and environment, critical facilities, and service providers.

**Social Infrastructure:** The second section examines Kearns' existing social infrastructure network and proposes interventions for strengthening and adding to that network. Areas covered in the Social Infrastructure section include active organizations and community partners, community centers and third places, community events, educational and religious institutions, community health, diversity and equity, and government accountability.

## Key Findings:

- There are over twenty (20) community organizations active in Kearns. However, few organizations are active in housing services or arts and culture programming.
- Kearns holds at least thirteen (13) community-wide events every single year, enhancing community pride and connection.
- Schools are a major asset in Kearns, extending beyond classroom education to provide youth, family, and community services like food banks and technology assistance.

- Kearns is more racially and linguistically diverse than Salt Lake County as a whole.
- The community performs poorly on several health indicators collected by Salt Lake County Health Department. However, this is likely due to economic conditions and social determinants of health. Kearns residents have a high rate of participation in preventative health programs and behaviors available to them, especially those that are low-cost or free.

## Key Recommendations:

- Bring community partners together annually to share research and lessons learned and collaborate on common goals (work program).
- Explore opportunities to increase community arts and culture programming.
- Make an intention to engage with diverse and underserved populations during planning and decision-making processes.
- Consider continuing "Mask Up Kearns" events even after the pandemic has subsided; use the platform to address other community health priorities.
- Engage residents in budgeting processes and take measures to ensure municipal fiscal responsibility.

**Digital Infrastructure:** The Digital Infrastructure section explores the condition of Kearns' infrastructure related to technology access and use. Topics covered in this section include Internet access, social media usage, the Digital Divide, and methods of communication.

## Key Findings:

- 7.6% of Kearns' households do not have Internet service at home, and only three (3) public Wifi hot spots exist in Kearns currently.
- Facebook is the social media platform that receives the most use by Kearns' residents; 66.9% of residents used this platform in the last 30 days.
- Kearns lacks a centralized platform for posting announcements, community event notifications, and other important information.

## Key Recommendations:

- Work with Granite School District, Salt Lake County Libraries, and Utah Communities Connect toward the goal of closing the Digital Divide.

- Extend the availability of public Wifi hot spots in Kearns.
- Consider establishing an online shared community calendar and announcement board.

**Brick and Mortar Infrastructure:** the fourth section examines Kearns' physical infrastructure, including healthcare facilities, road and rail networks, water, waste management, and housing conditions. It also proposes solutions for enhancing the operation of infrastructure and planning for long-term maintenance.

## Key Findings:

- There are no medical facilities located within the borders of Kearns, although nearby urgent care and hospital facilities can be accessed via transit.
- Connectivity for people walking and biking in Kearns is limited by the railroad and a lack of formal crossings.
- Kearns has high-quality drinking water, but like other places in Utah, Kearns is threatened by limited water availability. This situation is being exacerbated by more frequent and prolonged drought conditions being brought on by climate change.
- Although housing costs are lower in Kearns than in other places of Salt Lake County, 27.8% of households are still housing cost-burdened.
- An older housing stock puts Kearns at risk for earthquake damage, lead paint exposure, and may hinder the ability of residents to age in place.

## Key Recommendations:

- Investigate methods for funding long-term maintenance of Kearns' existing infrastructure, particularly roads and sidewalks.
- Start discussions about the community's future desires and plans should the railroad cease operations.
- Seek opportunities to reduce stormwater runoff on public projects (work program).
- Start a community tool-sharing program to connect residents with equipment that can be used to maintain or make improvements to homes and yards.

## Resilience in the Face of Hazards and Long-Term Changes:

the fifth section explores various hazards and long-term changes and the ways they may impact Kearns. It also suggests ways to enhance community resiliency and improve the ability of residents to adapt to sudden or long-term, structural changes.

## Key Findings:

- 13.7% of Kearns residents tested positive for COVID-19 between March 2020 and February 2021. A pandemic was among the top five hazard risks for Kearns as identified in the 2019 Salt Lake County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan – Kearns Annex.
- Over half of the Kearns population has made a purchase over the Internet in the last month, and over 25% of residents spend five hours or more online daily.
- COVID-19 is expected to have lasting impacts on society, the economy, and the built-environment.
- Climate change is impacting Utah in many ways, requiring mitigation and adaptation responses from the Kearns community (Figure R49).
- Hazards and longer-term changes are expected to impact some groups of people disproportionately (Figure R50).

## Key Recommendations:

- Prepare and distribute informational guides that assist Kearns' residents in making household emergency response plans (work program).
- Create a business climate in Kearns that is friendly to home occupations and telecommuting.
- Mitigate and adapt to climate change by pursuing programs and policies that reduce automobile emissions, conserve resources at the household level, and incorporate sustainable design into the built environment.
- Collaborate with community partners to ensure that planning and decision-making is not disproportionately burdening certain segments of the population.

**The Community Work Program:** the final section of the Element establishes Kearns' goals and objectives related to Resilience and Infrastructure. The section also includes the work program tables, which identify detailed actions that Kearns can take to promote well-functioning infrastructure and greater community resilience.

While we are excited about the content of and work program included in this Element, we recognize that it is only the starting place. Successful infrastructure and resiliency planning will require a continued commitment to action, creativity, adaptability, and community involvement.

## FEMA Community Lifelines

"A lifeline enables the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and is essential to human health and safety or economic security." (FEMA, 2019)

FEMA identifies community lifelines as those most critical services (or networks of services and assets), which support the day-to-day needs of a community. There are seven community lifelines, composed of smaller parts which keep the system working. These seven lifelines are:

1. Safety and Security
2. Food, Water, and Shelter
3. Health and Medical
4. Energy (Power and Fuel)
5. Communications
6. Transportation; and
7. Hazardous Materials.

FEMA focuses on this framework as applied to emergency management, recognizing that failure to stabilize lifelines after a disaster leads to adverse outcomes to community health, safety, and wellbeing. We examine these concepts more broadly throughout this Element, considering how to bolster infrastructure systems and community resilience even before disaster strikes.

You can learn more by reviewing [FEMA's Community Lifelines Implementation Toolkit 2.0](#).

**Figure R1: FEMA Community Lifelines**



Source: FEMA, 2019.

## Introduction

This Element deals almost exclusively with 'wicked problems'. Wicked Problems are characterized, generally, by these four things:

1. Incomplete or contradictory knowledge of the problem.
2. The involvement of many people (stakeholders) and opinions.
3. The large economic burden caused by the problem.
4. The interrelation between the problem and other problems (i.e. the inability to separate causes and effects).

By nature, Wicked Problems cannot be "solved", but can be improved with creative and multi-faceted approaches. This Element considers such Wicked Problems as poverty, community health, climate change, and inequity. We examine these wicked problems through the lenses of resilience and infrastructure, described in more detail below. Our goal is to create a space that empowers the community to consider and work toward addressing these challenges.

You can learn more about Wicked Problems [here](#).

### What does it mean to be resilient?

Resilience is the ability for complex systems to change, adapt, and transform, in positive ways and within a reasonable time frame, following hardships and disasters (adapted from Davoudi, 2012). In planning:

- Systems include social ones, such as the relationships of people within a community to each other and to other people, as well as ecological ones, such as the interactions of animals, plants, climate, and people.
- Why do we say change, adapt, and transform? These three verbs convey that true resilience is when we learn from and improve upon past experiences, rather than returning to a "normal" that may not have benefited everyone in the community equitably. Hardships and disasters comprise a variety of short and long term, sudden or gradual, expected or unexpected, small or large, experiences: natural disaster, discrimination, pandemic, economic recession, digital revolution, autonomous vehicles, climate change, cyclical poverty, and violence, for example.

### What is infrastructure?

Infrastructure is the set of fundamental structures and facilities serving a society and enabling its operation. Infrastructure often calls to mind brick and mortar structures such as bridges, telephone poles, and stormwater drains. However, there is also digital infrastructure—services necessary to a society's information technology capabilities—including Internet access and reliability. And, there is social infrastructure too: the assets that act as a conduit to bring people together and strengthen relationships. Social infrastructure includes schools, community groups, outdoor markets, coffee shops, libraries, parks, religious institutions, and other physical assets that create a culture of neighborliness, acceptance, and connection (Landau, 2019). Figure R2 shows how infrastructure was considered throughout this Element.

### How are infrastructure and resiliency connected? And what role does General Planning play?

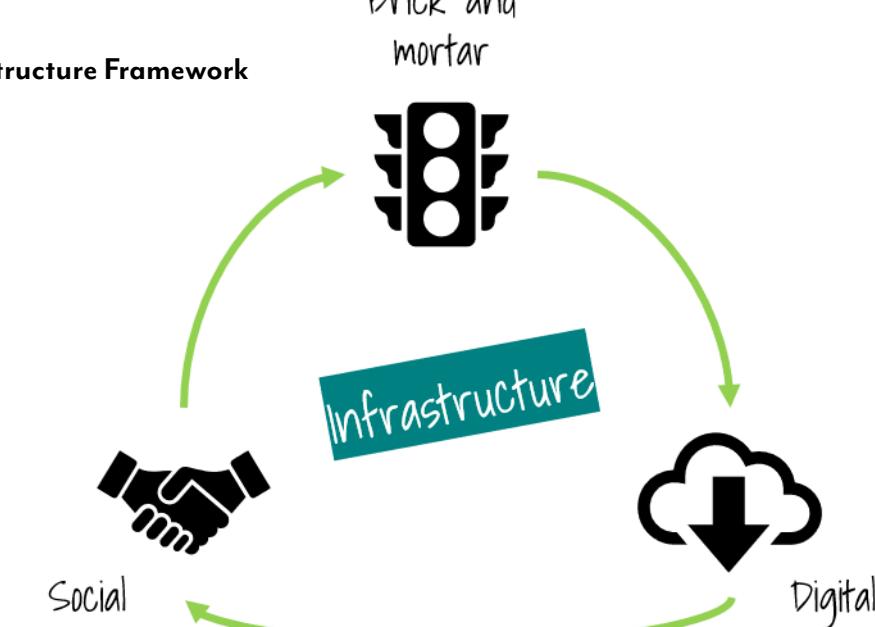
Infrastructure and resilience are tightly related. Well-maintained, high functioning infrastructure enables more resilient communities. Such communities have brick and mortar, digital, and social structures that support community members' everyday lives and improve their quality of life.

Communities that plan are generally more resilient to change. Research has found that the best way to help communities

cope with and recover from disasters is to support hazard and resilience planning BEFORE disaster strikes (Mercy Corps, 2019). How? The planning process provides a space for communities to self-educate about their needs and desires and to discuss difficult, controversial, or complex topics. By going through the planning process, including both numerical data analysis and the gathering of the publics' experiences, a community identifies its assets, opportunities, limitations, and threats. The community thus develops a realistic understanding of where it is at and where it hopes to be in the future. This allows a community to maintain its strengths, realize its opportunities, transform limitations into opportunities, and mitigate threats – in essence, to develop its resilience.

This Element uses a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to infrastructure and resilience at the forefront of planning best practices. The Resilience + Infrastructure Element ties together the assets mentioned in the previous chapters of the 2020 Kearns General Plan (e.g. land use, transportation) and applies the resilience framework to them, asking resilience for whom, resilience of what to what, resilience for when, resilience for where, and why resilience? (Meerow & Newell, 2016). In this way this Element aims to strengthen and deepen the work undertaken in the General Plan, but not to replicate these topics altogether.

**Figure R2: Infrastructure Framework**



Source: MSD Long Range Planning, 2020

## How does this Element Build on Other Initiatives to Plan for Resilience and Infrastructure?

The Kearns General Plan 2020 was initially adopted in October 2020, with Land Use, Transportation, and Economic Development Chapters. While each of these Chapters considered infrastructure and resilience as pertaining to that individual topic, there was no section dedicated to a holistic view of Resilience and Infrastructure in Kearns. This Element attempts to bridge those gaps by addressing:

- Hazard mitigation and adaptation
- Public health
- Community involvement and civic participation
- Social and economic equity, including access to opportunities
- Environmental justice

A few other local and regional planning initiatives are summarized below to give the reader an overview of the state of Resilience and Infrastructure Planning in Kearns and the region at large.

**Salt Lake County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2015):** this Plan examines hazard history and mitigation efforts for Salt Lake County generally. The Plan considers natural hazards, technological hazards (including hazardous materials and radiological incidents), and man-made hazards (such as civil disturbances and terrorism). The significance of these possible hazards to the planning area was evaluated based on the frequency (or anticipated frequency) of the events and the scale of the likely impact of such events. Following the adoption of this County-wide plan, similar plans were prepared for individual jurisdictions within Salt Lake County (see SLCo Hazard Mitigation Plan Jurisdictional Annexes below).

**Salt Lake County 2015 Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan:** the County Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan addresses existing conditions and strategies for developing and maintaining parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities. The Plan was intended to serve a wider goal of “improving lives through people, parks, and play” (SLCo Parks and Rec, 2015). The Plan includes a summary of a needs assessment conducted by the County in 2012. The assessment highlighted residents’

belief that County parks and recreation opportunities contribute to mental and physical health, as well as ecological preservation. Kearns is discussed in greater detail in the West Planning Area portion of the document.

### Salt Lake County Resource Management Plan (2017):

every county in the State of Utah is required by state code to prepare a Resource Management Plan. Salt Lake County’s Plan considers all natural resources on public lands in the County. The document examines existing conditions, management practices and responsible parties, and desired future states.

**Salt Lake County Hazard Mitigation Plan Jurisdictional Annexes (2019):** The Jurisdictional Annexes were a follow-up from the County Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2015. The Plan consists of a series of hazard analyses conducted for individual municipalities. Hazard risk data and mitigation strategies for Kearns start on page 772 of the document.

**MSD Capital Improvements (2020):** Every year, the MSD, through engagement with member communities, identifies and prioritizes capital projects for the upcoming fiscal year. Pages 26-36 of the 2020 Budget list the capital projects approved for the 2020 fiscal year. These projects directly impact the quality and availability of infrastructure in MSD member communities. Community plans, including the Kearns General Plan 2020 and the Master Transportation Plan, have a significant role in determining which projects are prioritized for the upcoming years. In 2020, 13 improvements were funded for Kearns, including active transportation projects and the first phases of construction to 4700 S (the largest project the MSD has funded to date).

**The Utah Roadmap - Positive solutions on climate and air quality (2020):** The Utah Roadmap is the only Utah comprehensive document to date that examines conditions and impacts of climate change and air quality while also suggesting strategies for mitigating and adapting to impacts. Plans for addressing air quality and climate change include adopting quality growth policies, ensuring economic sustainability while transitioning to a green economy, and continuing to research solutions. The Roadmap was prepared by the Kem C. Gardner

Institute and a Technical Advisory Committee composed of stakeholders. It was presented to the Utah Legislature in 2020.

**Wasatch Choice 2050:** Wasatch Choice 2050 is a regional vision for the Wasatch Front. Kearns and MSD staff members have been actively involved in the visioning process, which includes identifying future land use areas and transportation projects. The vision focuses on adapting to Utah’s continuing growth while preserving a high quality of life for existing and future residents. In other words, Wasatch Choice 2050 seeks to create a resilient region that can accommodate future changes and pressures, allowing residents to thrive. Hazard mitigation is not a central component of this Plan.

Despite a recent focus on hazard mitigation and adaptation in Utah, this element remains unique in that it simultaneously addresses issues of equity and wellbeing in the community. True resilience requires seizing opportunities to improve the living conditions of all residents, before, during, and after disaster strikes. This Element stands at the forefront of resiliency planning best practices and a national push to educate residents and address growing inequities through the general plan process.

**Figure R3: Olympic Oval in Kearns (cover of 2020 General Plan)**



**Source:** Kayla Mauldin, 2020

## Community Workshop

An assessment of 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats' (SWOT) and items to 'Achieve, Preserve, Avoid, and Eliminate' (APAE) for Kearns was conducted at the community workshop held in December of 2019. Several of the items identified in these analyses pertained to themes of resilience and infrastructure.

**SWOT:** Kearns residents identified components of their social infrastructure as major strengths to the community. These included 'compassionate people', the plethora of community activities and programs offered, the diversity of the population and longevity of residents, who form strong ties to Kearns.

Residents cited the reputation of Kearns as a major weakness, as well as crime, and a lack of digital infrastructure (few broadband choices and lacking communications). The SWOT analysis identified opportunities to bring people together through new amenities such as farmer's markets, or increased community events and resources. It also revealed the need to address threats such as poorly maintained infrastructure, air quality, and other environmental concerns.

**APAE:** Participants in the APAE analysis expressed their desire to preserve existing social infrastructure, including community events, third places (such as the library and parks),

and the unique identity and history of Kearns. In addition, they hoped to achieve greater citizen involvement in planning and decision-making processes and community events, engage more in the education of youth, and improve access to transit and digital infrastructure. In the future, Kearns recognized a need to avoid worsening environmental conditions and fiscally-irresponsible policies, particularly those that raise taxes beyond what residents can afford. Through planning and decision-making, the community hoped to eliminate wasteful spending and excessive taxes, violence, poorly maintained infrastructure, unemployment, and litter and junk accumulation that diminishes the aesthetic appeal of Kearns.

**Figure R4: SWOT Results Related to Resilience + Infrastructure**

		Helpful to achieving the objective	Harmful to achieving the objective
		Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal origin (attributes of the organization)	Opportunities	Threats	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a Farmer's Market</li> <li>Create more community resources, such as Dumpster Days</li> <li>Encourage growth of Small Businesses, like Utopia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Package Theft (perceived safety and security)</li> <li>Air Quality</li> <li>Lack of Lighting or Broken Lights</li> <li>Water Quality, Light Pollution, Illegal Dumping, and other Environmental Issues</li> </ul>	

**Source:** Kearns Community Workshop, December 2019

## GPSC Meetings

The Kearns General Plan Steering Committee (GPSC) held nine meetings between October 2020 and April 2021, focused solely on the preparation of the Resilience + Infrastructure Element. During these meetings, which were noticed and open to the public, the GPSC discussed Kearns-specific data related to Resilience + Infrastructure, explored potential solutions for promoting quality infrastructure and community resilience, and reviewed and revised drafted iterations of the Element. This document would not have been possible without the hard work, passion, and dedication of the individual members of the Kearns GPSC.

**Figure R5: APAE Results Related to Resilience + Infrastructure**

		Do You Have It?	
		No	Yes
Do You Want It?	Achieve	Preserve	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More Citizen Involvement</li> <li>Educating Children to Become Effective Community Stewards</li> <li>Public Transportation/ TRAX and Transit</li> <li>Municipal Broadband</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History – Written and Artifacts</li> <li>Community Events</li> <li>Library</li> <li>Green Space</li> <li>Dumpster Day</li> <li>Identity</li> <li>Kearns Veterans Memorial Plaza – Cannon Area</li> </ul>	
Avoid	Eliminate		
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies with poor, little, or no environmentally friendly policies</li> <li>Poor Air Quality</li> <li>High Property Taxes</li> <li>Recycling Fees</li> <li>Storm Water Fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excessive Taxes and Wasteful Spending</li> <li>Gangs/Violence</li> <li>Litter, Clutter, and Collected Junk</li> <li>Homelessness</li> <li>Poor Roads / Potholes</li> <li>Unemployment</li> </ul>	

**Source:** Kearns Community Workshop, December 2019

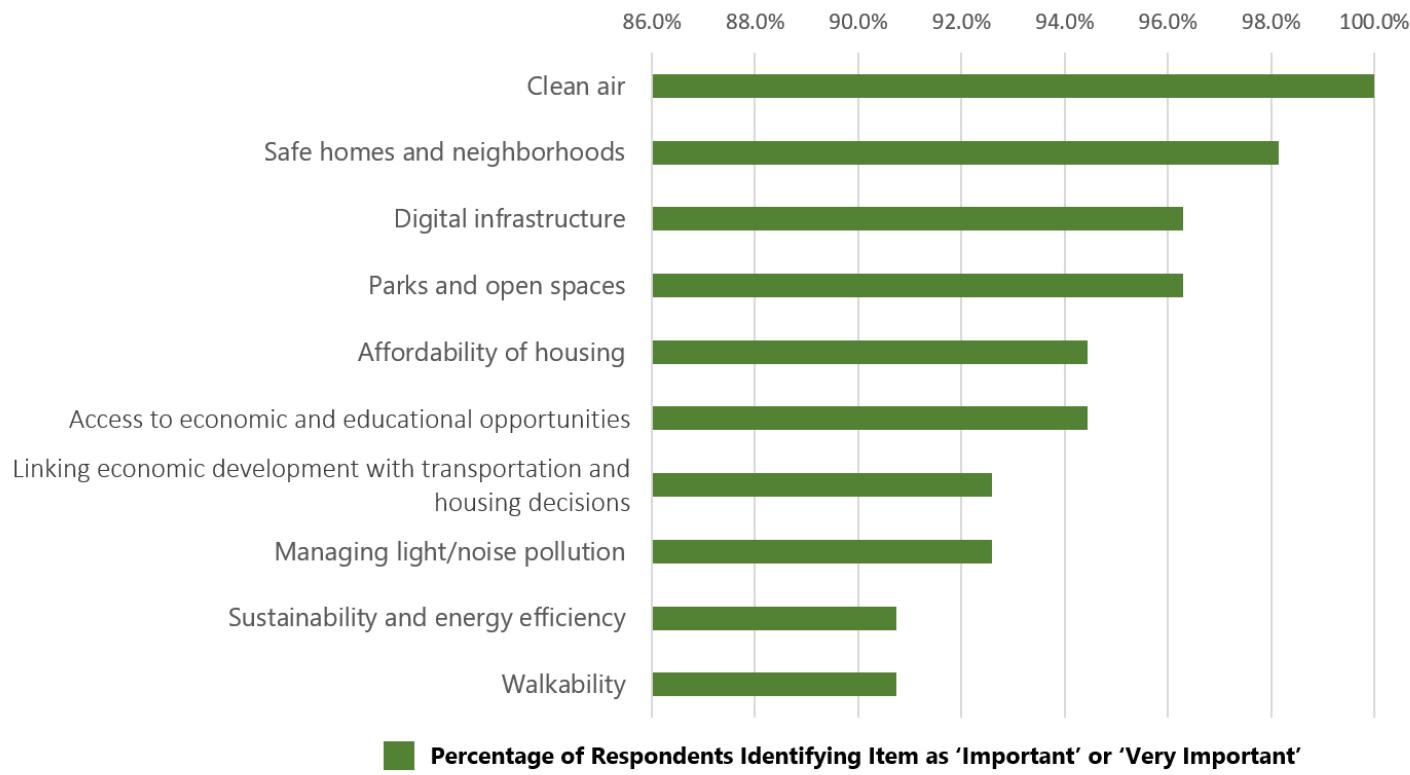
## Land Use and Transportation Survey

In 2020, 54 Kearns residents participated in the MSD's Land Use and Transportation Survey. One of the questions on the survey asked residents to rate the importance of various items based on how important each item would be to the future development of Kearns. Figure R6 lists the included items that are relevant to this Resilience and Infrastructure Element. Clean Air was identified as most important by residents, with 100% of Kearns' respondents identifying the item as 'Important' or 'Very Important' to the future development of Kearns. The top five items to consider, as related to Resilience and Infrastructure, are:

1. Clean Air
2. Safe Homes and Neighborhoods
3. Digital Infrastructure
4. Parks and Open Spaces, and
5. Affordability of Housing / (tied with) / Access to Economic and Educational Opportunities

**Figure R6: Land Use and Transportation Survey Results**

### TOP 10 ITEMS IDENTIFIED BY RESIDENTS AS 'IMPORTANT' OR 'VERY IMPORTANT' TO THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF KEARNS



Source: MSD Transportation and Land Use Survey 2020

## Existing Environmental Conditions

**Climate and Environment:** Kearns occupies 4.8 square miles of land west of Bangerter Highway within Salt Lake County. The Municipality is surrounded by incorporated territory on all sides, including Taylorsville to the east, West Jordan to the south, and West Valley City to the north and west.

Kearns climate, like much of Salt Lake Valley, is characterized by hot, dry summers and cold (sometimes severely so) winters. According to the Köppen Climate Classification System, Kearns falls within two climate zones: Dfa (Humid Continental) and BSk (Cold, Semi-Arid Climate). The Humid Continental Climate (western portion of Kearns) includes cold winter temperatures, and long, hot summers with large daily temperature fluctuations (Lumen, 2020). Kearns' Cold, Semi-Arid Climate, found in the eastern portion of the community, is considered characteristic of a semi-arid desert located in the rain shadow. The temperature range is large and rainfall is low (Lumen, 2020). Figure R7 compares Kearns' climate to that of the United States.

The elevation of Kearns averages at 4,531 feet above sea level (Salt Lake County, 2019). Parts of the community are elevated above the rest of the valley, providing impressive views of the surrounding mountain ranges. According to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data, the most prevalent soil types in Kearns are LaC, BhB, KdB, BuE, and 8001 (as described in Figure R8)(USDA, 2020). Anecdotal evidence from residents points to large quantities of gravel and pebbles

in area soils (conversation with Kearns' resident seeking information and support for residential xeriscaping on August 14th, 2020). Although this characteristic of Kearns' soil does not appear to significantly hinder development, it does have impacts on landscaping, and many residents struggle to grow and maintain anything other than native, climate-resistant vegetation.

**Figure R7: The Climate of Kearns Compared to the United States.**

Kearns	U.S
Average July High	<b>91.9 °F</b>
Average January Low	<b>24.5 °F</b>
Average Days with Precipitation	<b>92.0</b>
Average Snowfall	<b>54.0 in</b>
Average Rainfall	<b>19.5 in</b>
	<b>38.1 in</b>

Source: MSD Long Range Planning, using data from the Salt Lake County Hazard Mitigation Plan Jurisdictional Annexes (2019).

**Figure R8: Soil Types in Kearns.**

Soil Type	Description and Slope	Approximate Percentage of Area	Considerations
1. LaC	Lakewin sandy loam, 1 to 6 percent slopes	25.0%	Well-drained soils, conducive to agriculture/gardening and development.
2. BhB	Bingham gravelly loam, 3 to 6 percent slopes	17.6%	Well-drained soils, likely to be conducive to agriculture/ gardening and development, although gravel and rocks more prevalent than in LaC or KdB.
3. KdB	Kidman very fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	11.8%	Well-drained with low runoff potential. Conducive to agriculture/gardening and development.
4. BuE	Butterfield soils, 0 to 25 percent slopes	9.1%	Well-drained, but short depth to restrictive feature (lithic bedrock).
5. 8001	Bingham gravelly loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	6.4%	Well-drained with negligible runoff. Textural stratification changes drastically 20-34 inches deep.

Source: USDA Web Soil Survey, for rectangular area encompassing Kearns, 2020.

Although earthquakes are a potential hazard in Kearns (see further sections), risk of liquefaction of the ground in the community ranges from 'Low' to 'Very Low'. Figure R9 demonstrates that risk is 'Very Low' in most of the Municipality and becomes 'Low' only in the northeast corner of Kearns. Unreinforced masonry elevates this risk, as over one-third of homes in Kearns were built prior to 1975, and therefore are unlikely to meet current safety standards for seismic activity (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018 – Table B25034).

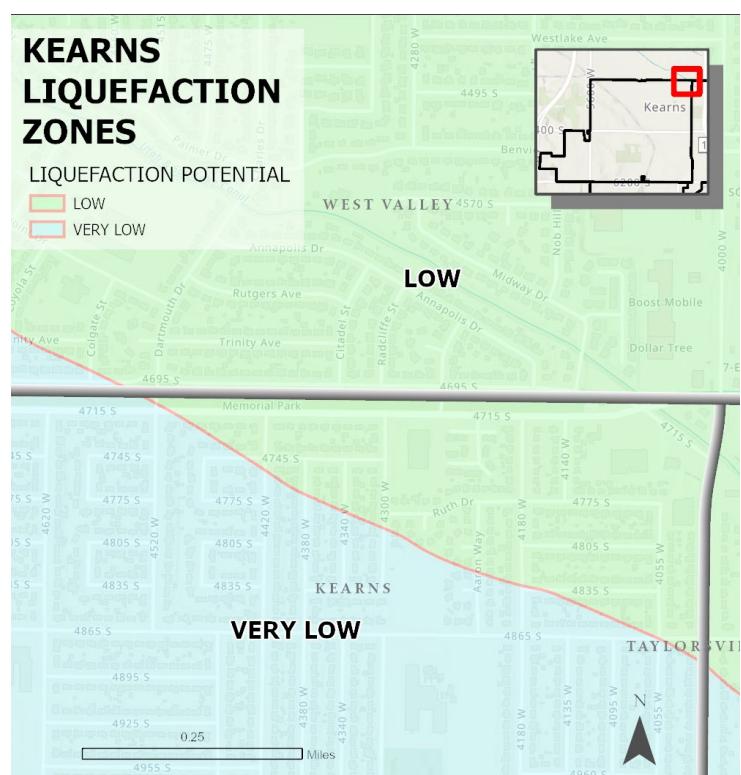
**Wildlife:** Wildlife data for Kearns is scarce. However, the Utah Division of Wildlife maps habitat areas for threatened and endangered species in the state. These habitat areas are organized into quadrants, with Kearns being split into two wildlife quadrants: 4011F8 and 40112F1 (Utah Division of Wildlife via AGRC, 2020) (See Figure R10). The first of these (east of 4620 W) includes habitat for the Least Chub, Burrowing Owl, Short-Eared Owl, Western Pearlshell, Long-Billed Curlew, California Floater, Ute Ladies' Tresses, Western Toad, Spotted Bat, Bobolink, Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, and Lewis's Woodpecker. Quadrant 40112F1 (west of 4620 W), includes habitat for the Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Short-Eared Owl, Lyrate Mountain Snail, Western Pearlshell, Long-Billed Curlew, Western Toad, and Bobolink.

Although Kearns sits within two quadrants that host habitat for these threatened and endangered species, it may be rare to find this wildlife within the Metro Township's boundaries. Kearns is largely developed, with little, if any, natural space left for wildlife occupation. As early as 1994, there was conflict in Kearns between development and wildlife preservation. A county-owned field near the intersection of 6200 S and 4800 W was home to a colony of burrowing owls, and stakeholders from around the Salt Lake Valley stepped in to advocate for the protection of the colony (Deseret News, 1994). One proposal from advocates was that 22 acres of the county-owned site be set aside as natural habitat and a 'living laboratory' for students throughout the Salt Lake Valley (ibid). These advocates were successful, and the field is now preserved indefinitely as a part of Cougar Park. However, Kearns, not yet incorporated when this field was preserved, lost the land to West Jordan City in 2000, when the City annexed the Oquirrh Shadows Subdivision (Deseret News, 2000). Although Kearns, now incorporated, hosts 197 acres of parks

and open space, none of this land has been preserved in its natural state or allowed to return to a form of 'wild' that would support native species, especially those that have not adapted to coincide with human activity.

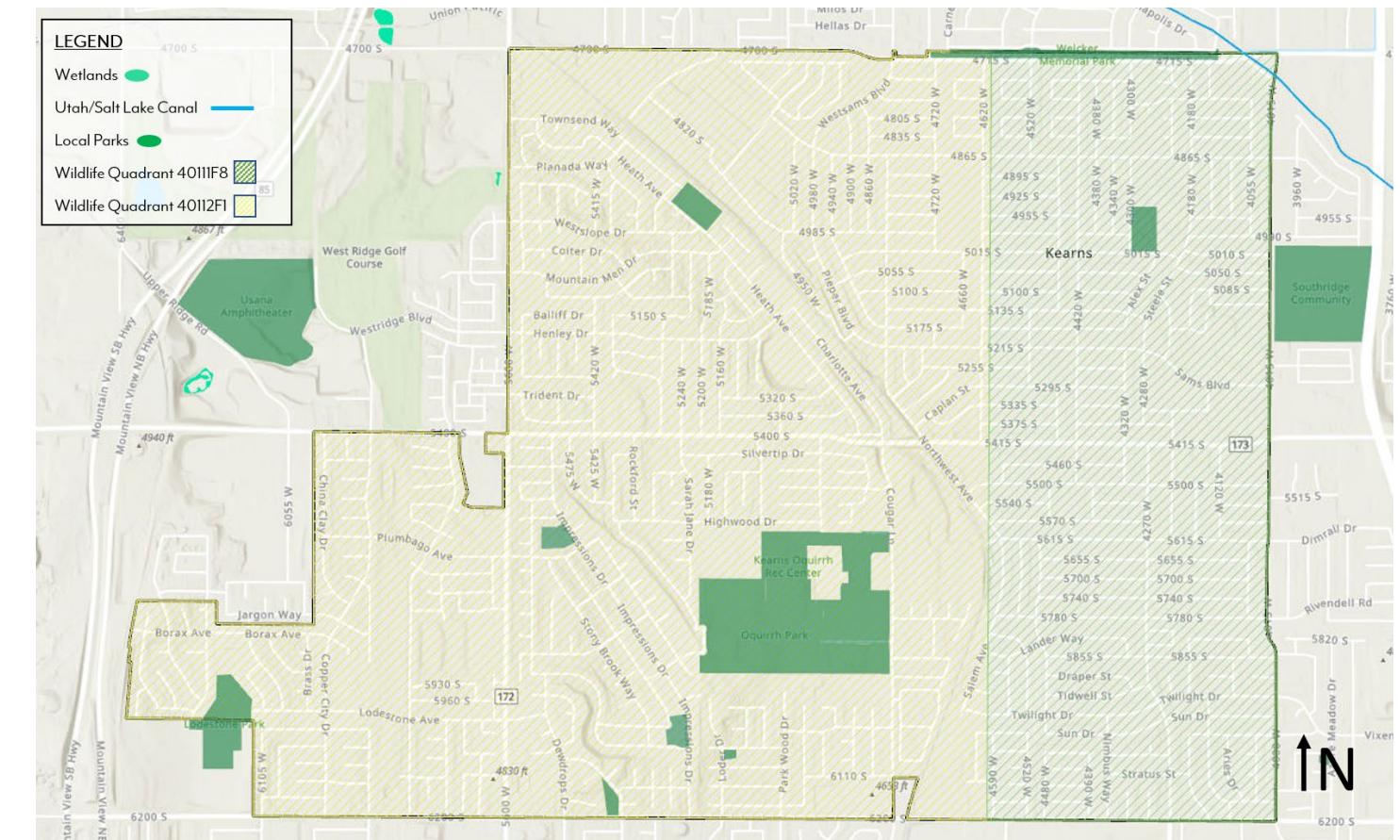
**Air Quality:** Air quality has been a persistent concern in the Salt Lake Valley (Ou, et.al, 2020). Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and small particulate matter (PM 2.5) are particularly high due to a mix of industry, automotive travel, and area sources, such as development and agriculture (Heal Utah, 2020). Ozone tends to impact Utah most heavily in the summer, when nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>X</sub>), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), heat, and sunshine react to form an invisible pollutant that hangs in the atmosphere and impacts lung health (Heal Utah, 2020). Small particulate matter is an issue in the winter, when temperature inversion traps polluted air in the valley, leading to unsightly and unhealthy levels of pollutants (ibid). Figure R11 shows the health impacts of poor air quality on the population.

**Figure R9: Kearns Liquefaction Map**



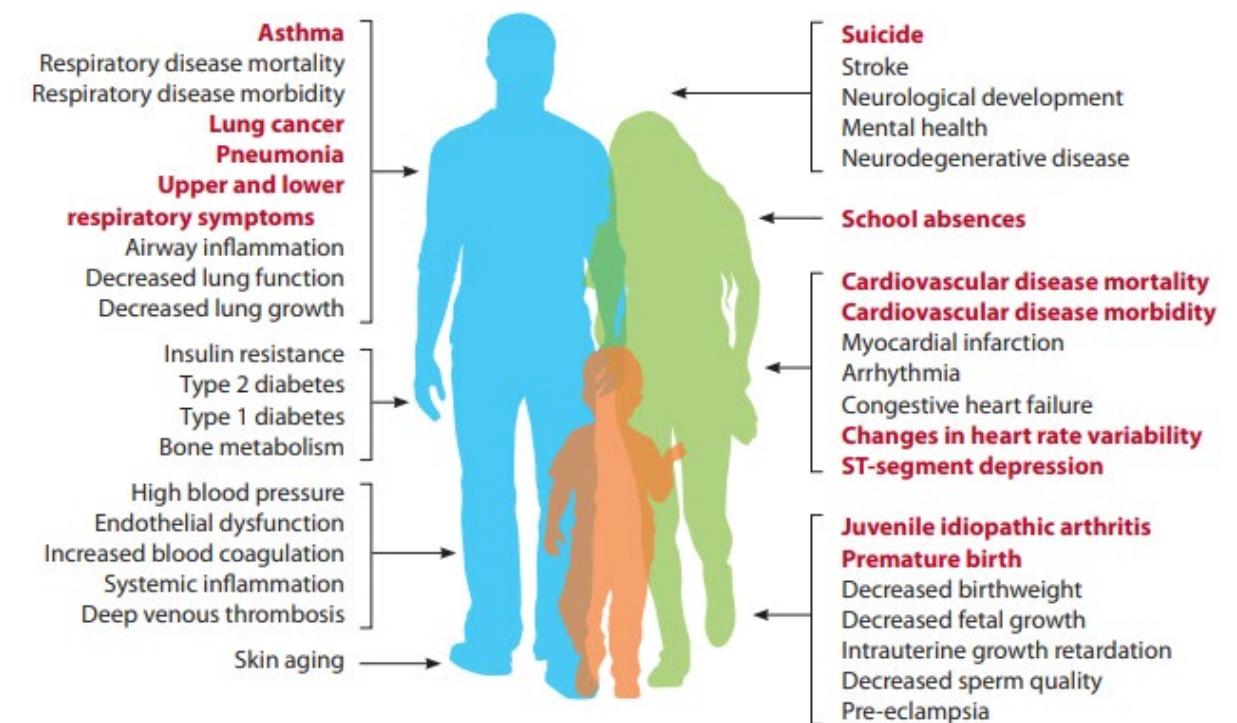
Source: MSD GIS, 2020

**Figure R10: Kearns Wildlife Habitat and Park Spaces**



Source: Map produced by MSD Long Range Planning, utilizing data from Utah Division of Wildlife 2020.

**Figure R11: Health Impacts of Poor Air Quality**



Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2020. Conditions highlighted in red have been explored in recent Utah studies. It is important to note that impaired air quality can lead to new health conditions or exacerbate existing conditions.

There are two 'Large Industrial Source Emitters', as defined by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (Utah DEQ), just outside of the municipal boundaries of Kearns. These are Hexcel Corporation and the West Valley Power Plant, both of which emit large quantities of small particulate matter (PM 2.5) into the atmosphere. The proximity to these entities contributes to Kearns' air quality challenges. For more information, please see the Utah Environmental Interactive Map. Portions of Kearns, including the proposed Warehouse District, rank in the 80-90th percentile for PM 2.5 concentration compared to other U.S. locations (EJ Screener, EPA, 2020).

Using the Environmental Justice Screening Tool maintained by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ozone is found to be considerably high in Kearns. The tool depicts the summer seasonal average of daily maximum eight-hour concentration of Ozone in air in parts per billion. Parts of Kearns, again the proposed Warehouse District area, rank in the 90-95th percentile for this measure when compared to locations across the U.S. (EJ Screener, EPA, 2020). However, southern Salt Lake County and all of Utah County rank worse, with Ozone concentrations at the 95-100th percentile of U.S. locations (*ibid*). With considerable concentrations of particulate matter and Ozone, there are health risks in Kearns. EPA classifies certain areas of Kearns in the 80-90th percentile for cancer risk due to inhalation of air toxins, and 80-90th percentile for respiratory health risks due to air toxins (*ibid*). Fortunately, air quality has gained state-wide attention in recent years due to pressure from residents and advocacy groups. Several regional planning and outreach organizations consider air quality in their plans and initiatives, including Heal Utah, Wasatch Front Regional Council, the Utah Clean Air Partnership, the Salt Lake County Health Department, and more. In 2020, the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute prepared the Utah Roadmap: Positive Solutions on Climate and Air Quality to guide the state forward.

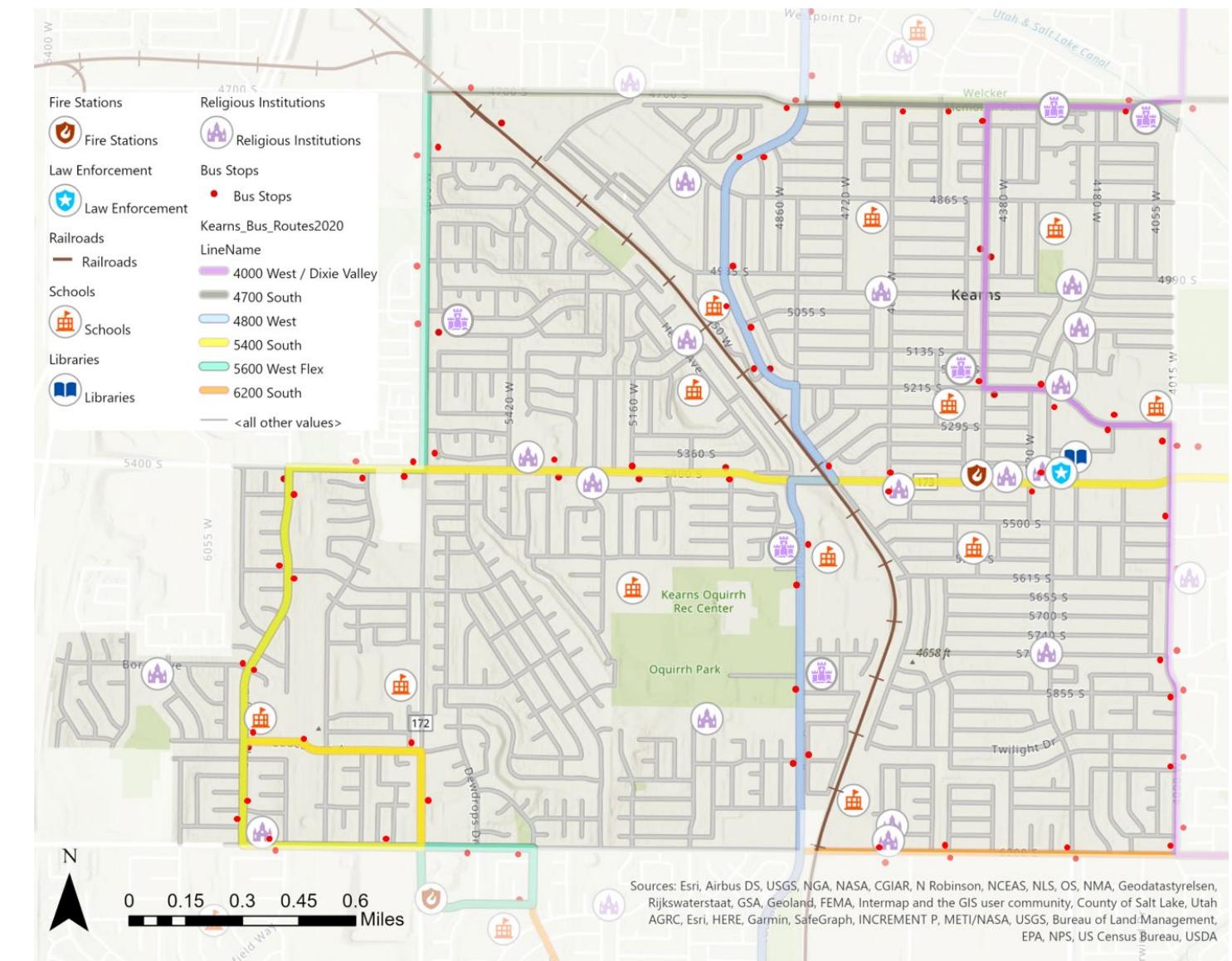
Seven strategies are at the forefront of this plan (Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2020):

1. Adopt emissions-reduction goals and measure results.
2. Lead by example.
3. Create a premier air quality/changing climate solutions laboratory.
4. Accelerate quality growth efforts.
5. Position Utah as the market-based EV state.
6. Provide economic transition assistance to rural communities.
7. Participate in national dialogue about market-based approaches to reduce carbon emissions.

#### Critical Facilities and Service Provision

Figure R12 shows critical facilities in Kearns. For the purposes of this Element, critical facilities include emergency services, community centers, schools, religious institutions, bus routes, and rail infrastructure. In addition to serving important functions in daily life, these facilities can be leveraged during an emergency to serve as gathering places, staging areas, distribution centers, or other types of shelter or aid provision.

**Figure R12: Map of Kearns' Critical Facilities**



**Source:** MSD Long Range Planning, using data from Utah AGRC and UTA.

## Provision of Services

Several parties aid in the provision of services to Kearns residents. The contributions of each are detailed below. Together, these groups provide high-quality, reliable, and affordable service to the community.

**Unified Police Department:** The Unified Police Department of Greater Salt Lake (UPD) allows communities in Salt Lake County to benefit from policing services without having to establish their own Police and Emergency Response Departments. This saves local governments and their constituents money, by allowing communities to share the cost of services. UPD provides SWAT, forensics, record-keeping, and dispatch to member communities. UPD maintains a precinct in Kearns, located at 4250 West 5415 South. The Precinct houses one Chief, one Lieutenant, and one Administrative Assistant. In addition, there are five Sergeants, eighteen patrol officers, one traffic officer, two Student Resource Officers (SROs), and two investigative units serving Kearns.

The UPD Kearns Precinct recently updated and expanded its facility, creating new spaces for community gathering and governmental operations. Starting in 2021, the Kearns Metro Township staff will hold their offices in this facility, conveniently located between the Kearns Library and Town Center. For more information, visit the UPD Website.

**Unified Fire Authority:** The Greater Salt Lake Unified Fire Authority (UFA) operates in a similar manner to the UPD, allowing member communities to share the cost of providing fire and emergency response services. UFA Fire Station #109 is located in Kearns and is presided over by three Battalion Chiefs and three Captains, in addition to their teams. UFA offers several services to communities beyond fire suppression, including life support, first response, rescue, hazardous materials and bomb response, code enforcement and plan review, emergency management, and education and certification in CERT, EMT, and wildfire fighting. UFA operates on an Interlocal Agreement with member communities. For more information, visit the UFA Website.

**Salt Lake County Emergency Management:** Salt Lake County Emergency Management (SLCo EM) is tasked with the responsibility of preparing for, creating and exercising plans for, and mitigating emergency events that threaten the County. SLCo EM prepared the 2019 Salt Lake County Hazard Mitigation Plan, which included several helpful resources for

evaluating risks in Kearns. The Local Emergency Municipal Planner for Kearns is Jim Woodward, an employee of UFA. To learn more about SLCo EM, follow this link.

**Kearns Metro Township Planning Commission and Council:** The Planning Commission and Metro Township Council for Kearns provide several important services to residents. The Commission is responsible for reviewing applications and making recommendations to the Land Use Authority on items such as the general plan, land use applications, or ordinance updates. The Council acts as the Land Use Authority for most matters in Kearns, and is tasked with making the final decision on adoption of items such as the general plan, Municipal budget, various land use applications, and ordinance updates. The Council also votes to appoint a Mayor from among their party.

**Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District:** Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District (GSLMSD or MSD) was established in 2015 to provide certain municipal services to the metro townships and other member entities, including planning and development services. The MSD is a Local District, created under the "Special District Code 17B 2a-1101." The MSD is comprised of five Metro Townships (Copperton, Emigration Canyon, Kearns, Magna, and White City), the Town of Brighton, and unincorporated Salt Lake County. It was created under Utah Code 10-2a, part four, which allows Metro Townships to be recognized as municipalities. Kearns Metro Township gained official recognition as a municipality on January 1, 2017 through a general election of the citizens in 2015. The MSD, together with the governmental alliance of the Metro Townships, has formed the first District of its kind in the United States.

**MSD Planning & Development Services (PDS)** provides strategic planning and local technical assistance to Kearns Metro Township. PDS supports community management policies, plans, and programs that address a wide range of issues including land use, housing, transportation, and economic development. As a Metro Township member, PDS manages Kearns' building permits and inspections, business licenses, code enforcement, land use and zoning, long-range planning, and stormwater management. To enhance government services for our members, PDS incorporates the latest in business and technology solutions. In 2019, PDS assisted Kearns with the preparation and adoption of the Moderate Income Housing Plan. In 2020, Kearns adopted its first General Plan since

incorporation, prepared by PDS and the Kearns General Plan Steering Committee. To learn more about the MSD, follow this link.

**Kearns Improvement District:** The Kearns Improvement District (KID) provides water and sewer utilities to many of Kearns' residents and residents in parts of surrounding municipalities. KID provides services to over 13,500 residential and non-residential connections. The District purchases water from Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District in order to serve its customers – with this water being delivered from Deer Creek Reservoir and local mountain springs and wells. Only six percent of water delivered by KID comes from wells located within Kearns. In 2019, KID reported meeting all State and Federal Requirements for drinking water quality (full report here).

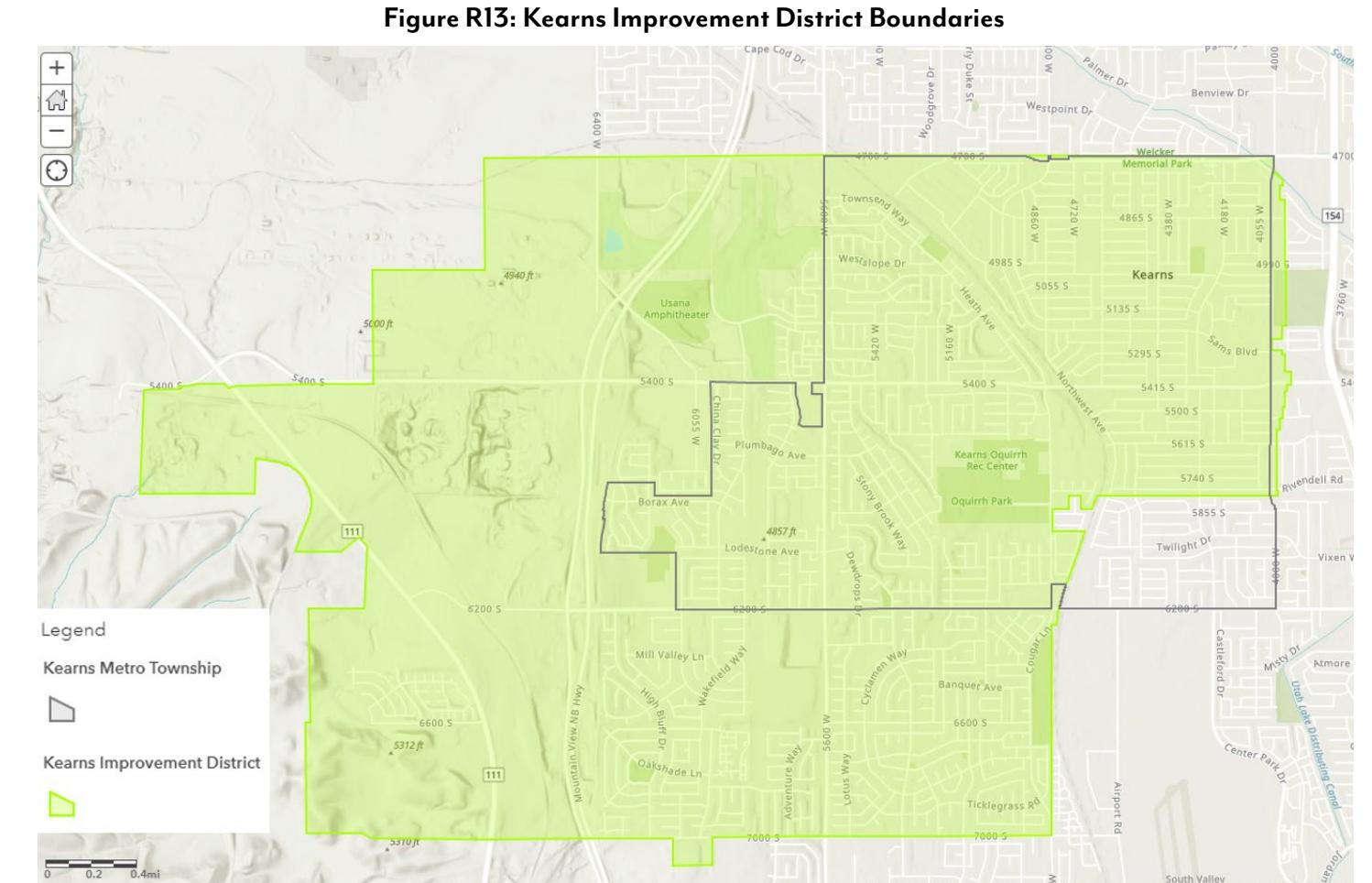
**Taylorsville-Bennion Improvement District:** The Taylorsville-Bennion Improvement District (TBID) provides culinary water and sanitary sewer service to areas of Kearns not serviced by KID (the southeast corner of Kearns). TBID serves

over 70,000 customers in Salt Lake County, but provides service to only a small portion of Kearns. Visit their website to learn more.

**Wasatch Front Waste and Recycling District:** Kearns receives all of its waste and recycling services from Wasatch Front Waste and Recycling District. Garbage and recycling pick-up is offered at a competitive rate of \$17 per month, with additional charges for extra waste or recycling cans. Wasatch Front WRD also provides a Green Waste Program for an additional cost; this program provides equipment and pick-up to aid residents in composting efforts. Visit their website here.

### Other Providers:

- Rocky Mountain Power: electricity/power
- Dominion Energy: gas
- Century Link: Internet
- XFinity: Internet



## What are Third Places?

The Theory of Third Places owes its existence and popularity to the urban sociologist, [Ray Oldenburg](#). According to this Theory, there are three places of critical importance to human kind. These are home (the first place), work (the second place), and community (the third place). Unlike at home and at work, places of community allow us to put our worries, stresses, and deficiencies aside. Oldenburg describes Third Places as those places that, “host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work” (Oldenburg, 2000).

Without Third Places, Oldenburg argues, life becomes nothing more but a shuttle from home to work and back again. Residents miss out on informal encounters with neighbors or chances to make new friends and acquaintances. They lack social and psychological support from their community, and they miss out on opportunities for relaxation and leisure (away from the responsibility of house chores or familial relationships).

**So what counts as a Third Place?** Third Places take on many forms, from local bars and coffee shops, to the general store, to a public park or plaza. A few important Third Places in Kearns include Kearns Oquirrh Park Fitness Center, the Kearns Skate Park, the Library, and the community's various eateries, bakeries, and local shops. These spaces allow for informal public gathering and interaction. The Theory of Third Places reminds us that a municipality requires more than housing and employment centers to be successful. We must invest in social infrastructure, including Third Places, to promote healthy and balanced lives for our residents.

**Figure R14: Theory of Third Places**



**Source:** MSD Long Range Planning, 2021, adapted from Personify Corp.

## Social Infrastructure

### Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Other Community Partners:

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) provide goods and services to supplement, enhance, or fill lapses in government capacity. NGOs are critical to the long-term sustainability of a community, serving residents during emergencies as well as during day-to-day life. In addition to providing Kearns with goods and services, these groups offer meaningful opportunities for residents to get involved in their community. Kearns is also served by a number of community partners outside of traditional government agencies. Through organizations, residents can meet with one another, form new ideas, and gain meaning and perspective through service to others; therefore, these organizations and partners are part of the social infrastructure of Kearns. Many NGOs and Community Partners are active in Kearns and summaries of each are provided below.

#### Main Players and Missions:

- **Utah Community Action – Kearns Head Start:** Head Start programs provide educational, medical and dental referral, and nutritious food services to youth and their families. The program is available for families whose income falls within federal poverty guidelines. There are several Head Start locations in Utah, including one at the Noorda Center in Kearns.
- **Granite School District:** All public schools located in Kearns are operated by Granite School District. In addition to education, the District provides several services to the communities it serves, including operating food pantries, providing opportunities for students to access technology, and hosting after-school and family support programs. More information on schools and programs is included in a later section of this Chapter.
- **KOPFC Board:** The KOPFC Board oversees programming and operations of the Kearns Oquirrh Park Fitness Center. The Center's motto reads, “We have programs for those who are young and those who are young at heart” (KOPFC, 2020). The board works to enhance community health through maintenance of facilities, provision of fitness and family programs, and offering of educational services.
- **United Way (211):** United Way is a non-profit organization with branches across the United States. The organization's focus is on Health, Education, and Financial Stability. United Way also operates 211, a 24hr, confidential hot line that connects callers with local resources, including veteran services, shelter from domestic violence, homeless resources, rehabilitation programs, disaster relief, and more.
- **Entheos Academy:** The Entheos Academy is a Charter School with campuses in both Kearns and Magna. The school's curriculum is based on service-learning which directly benefits the surrounding community. The Kearns location offers a Community Learning Center, and even hosts an air quality monitor to provide up-to-date information on air quality in Western Salt Lake County.
- **Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation:** the Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and celebrating Salt Lake's 2002 Olympic Winter Games Legacy. The Foundation encourages active and healthy lifestyles as well as public use of Utah's Olympic venues, including the Utah Olympic Oval located in Kearns.
- **Salt Lake Valley Habitat for Humanity:** The organization's declared message reads, “Salt Lake Valley Habitat for Humanity seeks to eliminate poverty and homelessness from the world and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat for Humanity invites people of all backgrounds, races, and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need” (Salt Lake Valley Habitat for Humanity, 2020). In 2016, the organization broke ground on the Field of Dreams EcoVillage, a community of Habitat for Humanity Homes designed using passive architecture to improve energy efficiency and reduce utility costs. The project, located near the intersection of 5780 S and Misty Way in the southeast quadrant of Kearns, is also described in the Land Use Chapter of the General Plan.
- **American Legion:** American Legion Post 132 combines members from Kearns and Magna. The group currently meets in a location outside of the Municipality. Membership to the American Legion supports advocacy for Veterans at the legislative level; it also helps to fund programs to assist Veterans in accessing their benefits. Nationwide, the American Legion supports several programs to meet the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs of American youth.
- **American Red Cross:** The American Red Cross is the largest service organization in the United States. The group provides free disaster relief services. They also provide essential services during times of non-emergency, including offering trainings and certifications to civilians, and organizing community blood drives. The Greater Salt Lake Chapter of the American Red Cross serves Kearns.
- **Homelnn Kearns Hotel:** The Homelnn Kearns Hotel is part of A Tall Order Foundation and the Homelnn Transitional Housing Network. A Tall Order Foundation is, “A 501(c)3 nonprofit foundation dedicated to providing low-cost housing and self-reliance programs to end homelessness in Utah” (A Tall Order, 2020). Homelnn Kearns Hotel, like other facilities in the network, provides low-cost, zero deposit housing for individuals previously experiencing homelessness. Transitional housing is a step between homelessness and independent living, offering individuals an opportunity to save money, gain life skills, and address health and substance abuse issues. This group plays a tremendous role in addressing homelessness not just in Kearns, but in the Salt Lake Valley as a whole.
- **The Children's Center:** Although the Children's Center is currently without an anchor location in Kearns, it is still an active organization in the community, providing families with the transportation needed to access the Center's critical services. Those services include providing therapy and mental health resources to children and their families and improving the resiliency of area youth.

**Figure R15: Organizations Active in Kearns and the Services They Provide.**

Please note that the list on the previous pages may not be exhaustive. Various local organizations continue to support and engage with the Kearns community, and several may have become active after the writing of this Plan.

Figure R15 presents a matrix of the organizations active in Kearns and the roles that they fill in the community. These organizations cover a multitude of services, including: Youth + Family, Food/Hunger, Refugee Aid, Senior, Education/Training, Recreation, Community Event Organizing, Health + Safety, Business Support, Housing, Environmental, and Emergency Response services. While Education/Training, Health + Safety, and Youth + Family programs and services are well-covered, other areas such as Senior Services, Housing, and Refugee Aid, receive relatively little attention. Recognizing the shared missions and services provided by these organizations will help the community to leverage assets and identify existing needs and gaps in service.

**Arts and Culture Programming**

Interestingly, no organizations in Kearns, outside of formal K-12 education, are actively working in the realm of arts, culture, or history. This represents a potential gap in the provision of community services. Research has repeatedly shown the benefits of engagement in local arts for community health, educational and economic development, and social cohesion. A report from the ArtsFund (2018) highlights just a few of these benefits:

- At-risk students involved in the arts are 23% more likely to attend college than peers with low arts involvement.
- 67% of dementia patients treated with music therapy felt less anxious and were able to reduce their use of medication.
- 45% of medical institutions in the United States offer some sort of arts program; the majority of these state the purpose of the art program is to benefit patient recovery (ArtsFund, 2018).

Promoting participation in local arts in Kearns could provide numerous benefits to the community, including addressing some of the social, health, and economic inequities identified in this Element. Local Arts Councils exist in neighboring [Taylorsville](#) and [West Valley City](#) and actively plan city events, art exhibits, and more. However, a local program may help to engage more Kearns' residents in the arts and promote social connectedness, community culture, and identity. Furthermore, arts programs can empower residents to aid in neighborhood design and beautification where desired.



**Source:** MSD Long Range Planning, created using information available from organization websites and anecdotal evidence from General Plan Steering Committee Members.

## Community and Senior Centers

In addition to active organizations, Kearns boasts a few key physical locations that contribute to the community's social network. These amenities provide services, meeting spaces, and fill the overall social, recreational, and educational needs of residents.

- **Kearns Library:** The Kearns Library is a branch of the Salt Lake County Library System. It is located at the intersection of 5415 S and 4320 W. The branch closed at the end of 2018 for renovations, and re-opened at the end of 2020 with some restrictions in place for COVID. The new facility features a kitchen for hosting health and nutrition education programs, youth area, media center, gathering and presentation spaces, a business center, a maker space and more – in addition to an extensive book collection. The facility serves not just as a library, but as a community center for Kearns. The Library was funded through the New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) Program, which is dedicated to projects intended to be catalytic in traditionally under-invested-in communities. Outside of the facility, a new pedestrian plaza was designed in keeping with the vision of this area as a future Town Center and event space.
- **Eddie P. Mayne Kearns Senior Center:** The Eddie P. Mayne Kearns Senior Center was opened in 1996 at 4851 West and 4715 South, following residents' extensive advocating to the County and State. The Center includes rooms for art and fitness classes, reading and music, dining and entertainment. A later expansion to the building provided space for a library and media center, as well as additional office space. This Center is one of the busiest in Salt Lake County, and in 2014 won National Accreditation, a prestigious certification honoring the high quality of service the Center offers to its member seniors. Unfortunately, the Eddie P. Mayne Kearns Senior Center was required to close during the duration of the COVID-19 Pandemic, but the Center has continued to find ways to serve members, namely through preserving its meal service, albeit moving to a drive-thru format. More on the Senior Center can be found [here](#).

- **Kearns Oquirrh Park Fitness Center (KOPFC):**

The KOPFC is a celebrated community treasure, offering fitness and recreational programs for individuals and families of all ages. The Center is located in the same complex as the Utah Olympic Oval and Kearns Oquirrh Park. The facility includes three indoor pools, an outdoor waterpark (open during the summer), a gymnasium, cardio and weight rooms, sauna and steam rooms, and tennis and pickleball courts. In addition to offering use of facilities, room rentals, and fitness classes, the Center provides child care, training and certification, and even a grill for summer recreationists. KOPFC serves as a crucial gathering and entertainment spot for Kearns residents. [Learn more here](#).

- **Kearns Recreation Center:** The Kearns Recreation Center is managed by Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation and located adjacent to the Olympic Oval and KOPFC. The Rec Center offers a summer camp, outdoor soccer program, and gymnasium for rent. While the facility does not include a swimming pool or fitness equipment, these amenities are offered nearby. One of the greatest advantages of the Kearns Rec Center, according to residents, is the offering of before and after school programs and childcare. These programs are relatively affordable, ranging from \$275 to \$475 per month. The Rec Center frequently participates as a partner in community events, although this has been put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Figure R16: Kearns Library Interior**



**Source:** Kayla Mauldin, 2020.

**Figure R17: Eddie P. Mayne Kearns Senior Center**



**Source:** Salt Lake Tribune, 2010.

**Figure R18: Waterpark at KOPFC**



**Source:** KOPFC, 2020.

**Figure R19: Kearns Rec Center Child Care**



**Source:** Katherine Scott, 2017 (via Google Maps).

## We Are Kearns Strong!

Starting in March of 2020 and continuing into 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic rocked the United States. Kearns was not immune, but the community took advantage of available grant programs to fight back. Federal CARES Act funding, distributed through Salt Lake County, allowed Kearns to purchase protective items for residents. Items included masks that read "Kearns Strong", hand soap, sanitizing wipes, thermometers, and more. Residents picked up bags of goodies through drive-thru events, staffed by the Kearns Community Council, Kearns Council, and Unified Police Department. Sometimes, the events accomplished other goals as well – like helping residents register to vote in the fall of 2020. Although the pandemic placed a heavy toll on society, Kearns expressed its resilience by finding a way to help residents stay safe and healthy while sharing in common experiences. Together, we are 'Kearns Strong'.

The success of this model during the pandemic indicates that it could also be used during future emergency events to connect residents with needed information and resources.

**Figure R20: "Kearns Stand Strong"**



A representative from Kearns advertises a 'Mask Up Kearns' event during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Source: ABC4 News Utah, 2020)

## Community Events Strengthen Ties

Who knew that a bedroom community of over 36,000 people, located in quickly growing Salt Lake Metropolitan Area, could offer residents a rich social life and that close-knit feel of an idyllic American small town? Kearns is truly an exceptional community. Annual events bring residents together, celebrating holidays, offering goods and services, raising funds, and building a shared community identity. These events grow every year, drawing in old and new residents alike. No wonder Community Council members refer to Kearns as "the best community ever" (Paula Larsen, 2020 – via Kearns Community Council Facebook Page).

### Fall Events

- **Annual Utah Olympic Oval Trick-or-Treat Street**, which provides a safe space for children to participate in Halloween activities and collects pantry items for local food banks.

### Winter Events

- **Christmas on 54th**, organized by the Kearns Community Council and providing Christmas tree and light displays to spread holiday spirit among residents.
- **Utah Olympic Oval Holiday Festival**, an annual community tradition that includes crafts, pictures with Santa, sports clinics, and a figure skating performance on the Oval.

### Spring Events

- **Annual Community Easter Egg Hunt**, organized by Salt Lake County Rec Center in partnership with Kearns Community Council. This event was adapted in 2021 to meet COVID-19 restrictions. A drive-thru Easter event was organized with bags of goodies and useful resources for youth and families.
- **Annual Pancake Breakfast** organized by the Unified Fire Authority (UFA).
- **Miss Kearns Royalty**, a pageant encouraging community service, self worth, and fun. This tradition is over 20 years old and a beloved staple of the Kearns community.
- **Armed Forces Day**, gathers the Community Council, UPD, UFA, the American Legion, and general public to retire old flags and raise new ones for the year.
- **KOPFC Health Fair**, annual event which gathers several organizations active in Kearns' community health initiatives. The event features fun activities for families as well as educational health programming.

### Summer Events

- **Hometown Days and Parade**, a two-day event put on by the Community Council celebrating the Kearns community.
- **KOPFC's Fire, Water, and Ice Festival**, now in its 20th year. This event features fireworks, live music, food, and more.
- **Annual Doggy Paddle** held on the first Saturday after Labor Day at the KOPFC.
- **Stan's Market Car Show Cruise Night**, now in its 4th year.
- **Night Out Against Crime**, a collaboration between UPD and partner organizations. This event allows residents to meet and connect police officers, firefighters, and other emergency response personnel that serve Kearns.
- **KOPFC and Utah Olympic Oval Friday Night Flicks**, providing free outdoor movie screenings at Oquirrh Park in Kearns.

### Non-Annual Events

- Summer Farmer's Market at the Senior Center with Utah State Extensions, Green Urban Lunchbox, and the Jail Horticulture Program.
- 1,000 Reasons We Love Kearns Food Drive: In 2020, the Unified Police Department (UPD) Kearns Precinct collected 5,541 pantry items (five times their goal) for local food banks.
- Wasatch Front Waste and Recycling Area Clean-up Days, bi-annual.

The potential exists to further strengthen Kearns by advertising these events to residents and pairing them with missions that benefit the health, safety, and social wellbeing of the community. Several of these events already serve to connect participants with information and resources, or to raise funding for issues that the Kearns community is passionate about. One existing challenge is the lack of a centralized platform for sharing event information. Potential participants have to scan multiple websites and platforms to see all events. A single community calendar could help keep events and information organized, ensuring that residents and visitors do not miss out. It is possible that events have unintentionally been left out of this list because we could not find event details or because our steering committee and staff members were unfamiliar with the happening.

\*Figures R21-R24 courtesy of the Kearns Community Council (2017-2021).

**Figure R21: Armed Forces Day**



**Figure R22: Christmas on 54th**



**Figure R23: Easter Egg Hunt**



**Figure R24: Hometown Days**



## Did You Know?

1.8% of the student body of the average Kearns Public School is experiencing homelessness. Some schools in Kearns report as much as 3% of their student population facing homelessness (Utah State Board of Education – School Profiles, 2020). According to the McKinney-Vento Act of 1987, homelessness is broadly defined as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,” whether that be a student residing in a homeless shelter, in a family car, in substandard housing conditions (like an overcrowded apartment or unit lacking heat), or even in a hotel or motel (Granite School District, 2021). Such living conditions may cause several challenges for students, including difficulty finding transportation to participate in sports and afterschool programs, inability to access items related to personal hygiene, stigma from society or peers, and limited availability of technology or other resources to support learning. Students facing homelessness are guaranteed a few basic rights through the McKinney-Vento Act of 1987, including transportation to school, enrollment without records, and choice to remain in school of origin. Other communities have used federal funding from the Act to support these youth by:

- Opening educational facilities early for students’ use of showers and bathrooms.
- Designing bus routes to pick up students in homeless shelters first and drop them off last, so that the students’ living situations remain private from peers.
- Launching programming that connects students with available supplies, technology, and Internet to enable completion of at-home learning exercises.
- Assisting students in enrolling in free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs.
- Establishing scholarships and sponsorship programs that help students gain access to transportation and equipment for extracurricular activities (including UTA passes, sports gear, or other items needed to fully participate).

For more information on supporting homeless youth in U.S. school systems, please visit the [U.S. Department of Education Website](#). To find out more about services provided through Granite School District, please visit this website.

## Educational Institutions

Educational institutions in Kearns serve a diverse student body and offer several unique learning and community programs. Kearns hosts nine public schools, all within Granite School District (Figure R25). In total, there are six elementary (K-6) schools, two middle (7-8) schools, and one high (8-12) school. There are also three private and charter schools in Kearns that serve a range of ages (Figure R25). Together, these public and private schools offer seven preschool programs.

It should also be noted that educational institutions play a role in local emergency response. The American Red Cross designates Elementary Schools as relocation centers. Middle Schools and High Schools are established as Points of Distributions (PODs). In this way, educational facilities serve both as social and brick-and-mortar infrastructure.

Enrollment in Kearns’ schools is high. The elementary schools have an average enrollment of 508 students each, while the middle schools average 637 students each (Utah State Board of Education – School Profiles, 2020). In 2019, Kearns High School had 2,244 students enrolled (ibid). Private school enrollment may be lower. In 2020, St. Francis Xavier had 256 students (Private School Review, 2020). Enrollment data for Kearns’ other two private schools is unknown. On average, over half (58.7%) of the teachers in any given Kearns public school have taught at that school for three years or longer (Utah State Board of Education – School Profiles, 2020).

Student proficiency in Kearns’ schools tends to be slightly below that of Granite School District as a whole. For example, in 2019, Kearns High School saw 25% of students proficient in Language Arts, 15% proficient in Math, and only 10% proficient in Science ([Utah State Board of Education, 2021](#)). For the same year, nearby Taylorsville High School experienced 35% Language Arts proficiency, 27% Mathematics proficiency, and 21% Science proficiency (ibid). These differences can be largely attributed to sociodemographic differences between the communities. In fact, when looking only at data for students at Kearns High School who are NOT economically disadvantaged, proficiency levels rise significantly (see Figure R27 on the next page). The Granite Education Foundation works to improve education outcomes through a number of programs that support students and their families, particularly by providing scholarships, donating food and resources, or organizing volunteers to serve in classrooms and at events (see Figure R28 on the next page).

The importance of Kearns’ schools extends beyond the education of young students. Many of the Municipality’s educational facilities provide community services and family outreach. These programs help various Kearns residents, but also help to support the learning of children, whose progress can be impacted by socioeconomic circumstances, hunger, and overall health. Two food pantries are operated by local elementary schools (David Gourley and Beehive Elementary). The Entheos Academy maintains a community learning center with afterschool programs and family services. Another elementary school, South Kearns, offers students access to chrome books and maker spaces that can help them to improve their technology literacy. West Kearns Elementary offers a gifted Spanish/English Dual Language Immersion Program that draws students from around the Valley. And Kearns High School, in addition to rallying residents around Friday night football games, produces Kearns’ only community newsletter. Kearns’ network of schools provides unparalleled social infrastructure, uniting families, providing community resources, and empowering youth through education.

**Figure R26: Gates Field at Kearns High School**



**Source:** @baseballfieldz on Twitter, 2015.

**Figure R25: Schools in Kearns**



### Public

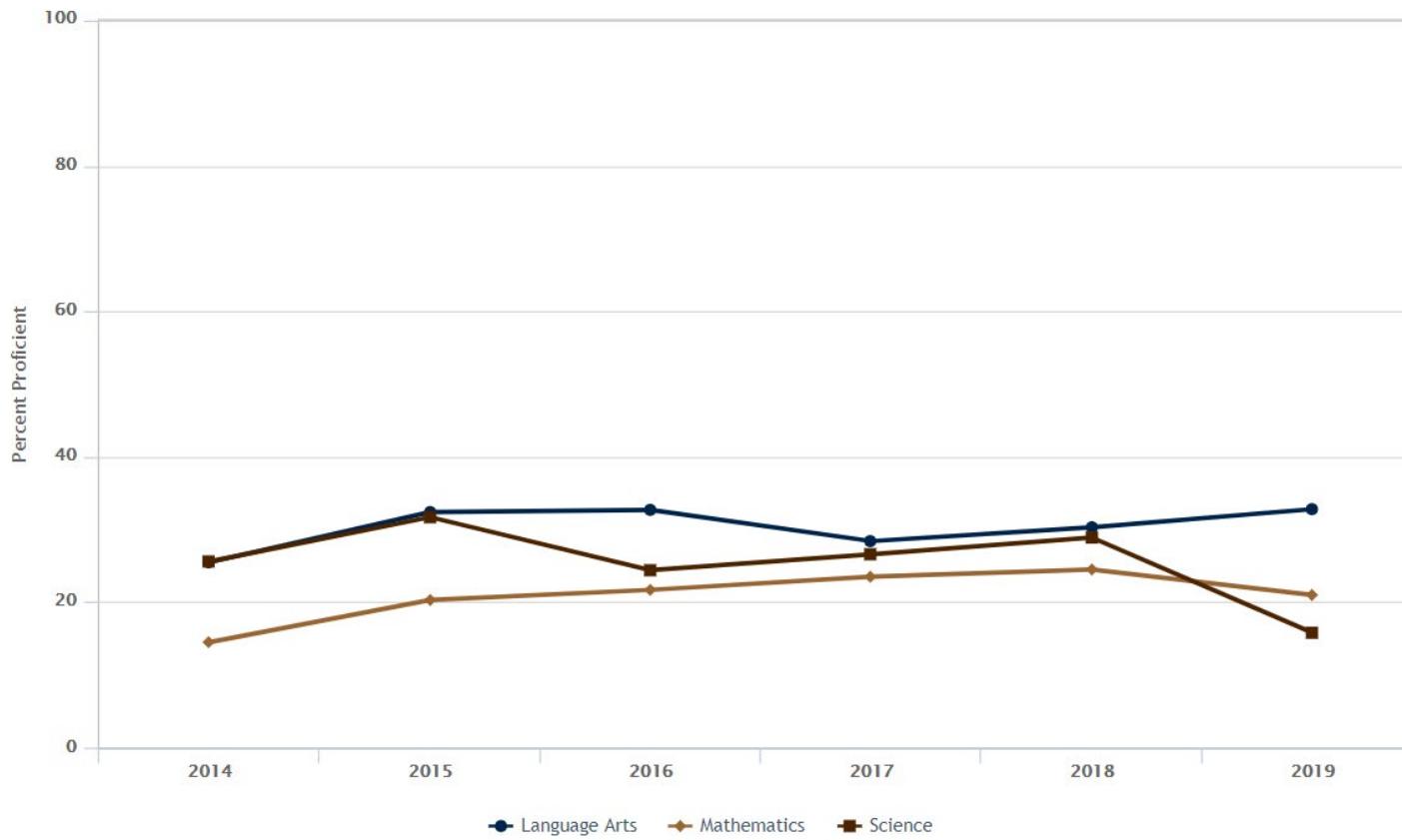
- West Kearns Elementary
- David Gourley Elementary
- Western Hills Elementary
- Beehive Elementary
- South Kearns Elementary
- Thomas W. Bacchus Elementary
- Thomas Jefferson Junior High
- Kearns High School
- Kearns Junior High



### Private/Charter

- St. Francis Xavier School
- Entheos Academy – Kearns
- Smart Kids Learning Preschool

**Source:** MSD Long Range Planning, 2021.

**Figure R27: Proficiency of Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students at Kearns High School (2014-2019).****Student Proficiency Results Over Time for Kearns High**

Test Subject	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Language Arts	25.5%	32.4%	32.7%	28.4%	30.3%	32.8%
Mathematics	14.5%	20.3%	21.7%	23.5%	24.5%	21.0%
Science	25.6%	31.7%	24.4%	26.6%	28.9%	15.8%

**Source:** Utah State Board of Education (Data Gateway), 2021.

**Figure R28: Granite Education Foundation by the Numbers (2017/2018).**

# BY THE NUMBERS

GRANITE EDUCATION FOUNDATION 2017/2018



NATIONAL RANKING  
OF GRANITE  
EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION.

# \$154,000

VALUE OF SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED OR FACILITATED.



# 8,473

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER  
HOURS GIVEN BY THE  
COMMUNITY SINCE JULY 2017.



# 5,887

NUMBER OF STUDENTS PROVIDED  
2017 HOLIDAY ASSISTANCE.



# 25,000

NUMBER OF BACKPACKS FILLED WITH  
SCHOOL SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED TO STUDENTS.

# 206

AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS  
PROVIDED AID (CLOTHES, SHOES,  
HYGIENE, ETC) MONTHLY, WITH A  
VALUE OF \$66,084 SINCE JULY 2017.



# \$24,300

VALUE OF CASH FOR CLASSROOM GRANTS AWARDED TO 49 TEACHERS.

# 26,205

NUMBER OF FOOD KITS  
COLLECTED BY THE  
COMMUNITY FOR STUDENTS.

**Source:** Granite Education Foundation, 2021.

## How Does Diversity Make Us More Resilient?

In simplest terms, the Law of Requisite Variety finds that “the more diverse a network, the greater its ability to respond to change” (Tony Nwachukwu, et.al., 2011). Varieties of perspectives, skill sets, and ways of thinking lead to unique responses to the problems communities face. This is extremely important as the issues faced by communities become increasingly complex. The Law of Requisite Variety proposes that the more varied the responses are to a problem, the more likely that one of the responses will be successful. [You can learn more about the Law of Requisite Variety here.](#)

Communities can embrace diversity in many ways. This may look like:

- assembling a group of decision-makers with unique professional and educational backgrounds to propose and evaluate land use code updates.
- working to attract a diverse mix of businesses (and employment opportunities) to a local shopping center or gathering place.
- partnering with local organizations to host community events that showcase the unique cultures present in the area and ways to become active in groups and organizations.
- providing multimodal transportation and varied housing options that appeal to a variety of users, preferences, and needs.

**Figure R29: 5 Key Elements of Planning for Diverse Communities**



Source: García, Garfinkel-Castro, & Pfeiffer, 2019.

## Religious Institutions

There are sixteen religious institutions currently located in Kearns, representing seven denominations of Christianity (including nondenominational). At this time, no facilities in Kearns are dedicated to religions other than Christianity. However, several religious organizations in nearby Salt Lake City serve the broader Salt Lake Valley, including Kearns. Examples include [Chabad Lubavitch of Utah](#), the [Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake](#), and the [Salt Lake Buddhist Temple](#). In addition to hosting services and events for members, Kearns’ religious institutions operate food pantries, soup kitchens, and refugee programs.

In emergencies, religious institutions are often designated as Points of Distribution (PODs) by the American Red Cross. These buildings can provide the important function of housing critical resources and connecting those in need with resources.

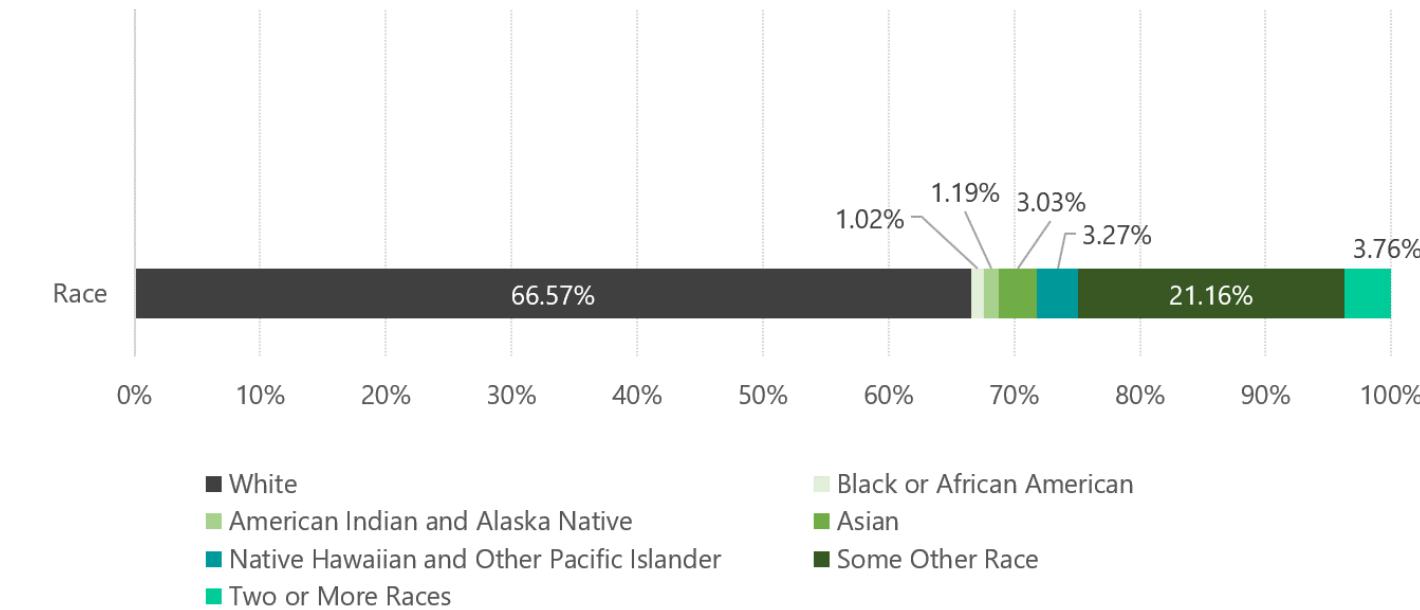
## Resident Diversity

Kearns celebrates its diversity. Although differences in race, religion, ethnicity, and language can create communication barriers, Kearns recognizes the strength that comes from different perspectives and the identity fortified by a unique and varied culture. This comes across clearly in the results from the 2019 Community Workshop, where residents identified ‘Population Diversity’ and ‘Compassionate People’ among the community’s top strengths.

Figure R30 shows the diversity in racial identity of Kearns’ residents. Approximately two-thirds of the population identify as Caucasian/White, while 3.27% of the population identifies as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and 3.03% identifies as Asian (Figure R30). One-fifth of Kearns’ population identifies as some other race, and 3.76% of the population belongs to two or more races (ibid). Kearns is also ethnically diverse, with over 35% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino of any race (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018 – Table S0601). Over one-third of Kearns’ population (5+ years) speaks a language other than English at home (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018- Table S1601). Languages spoken in Kearns are shown in Figure R31.

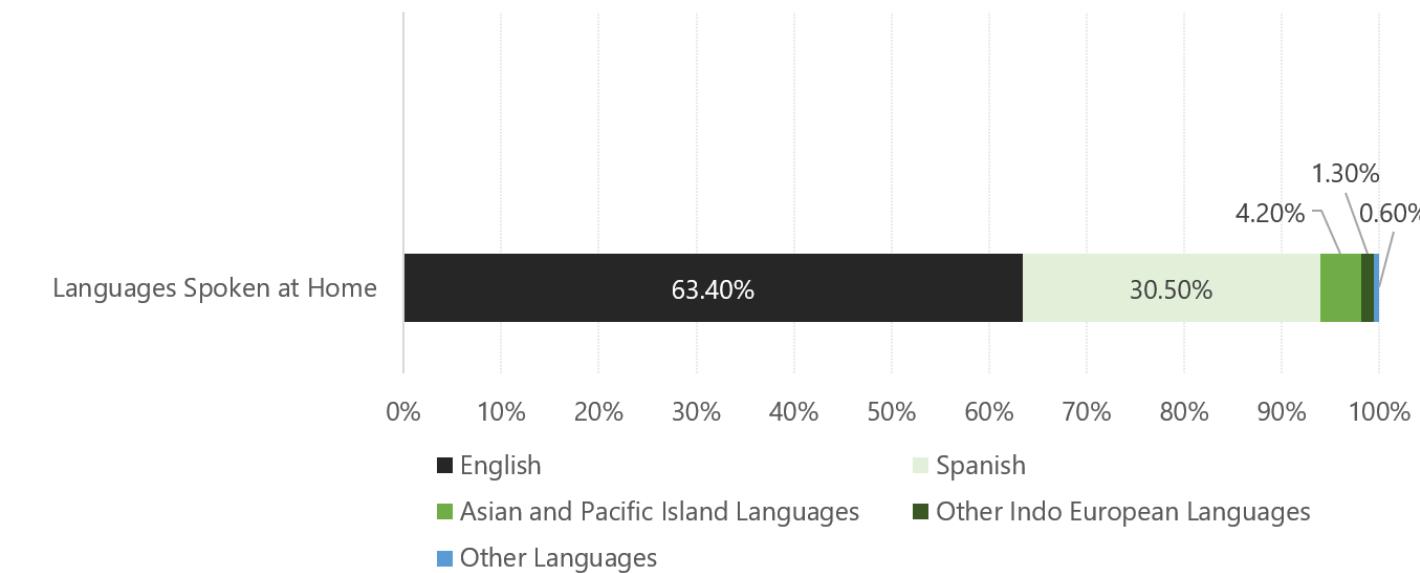
Compared to Salt Lake County, Kearns is considerably more racially and linguistically diverse. The population of the County is 80.1% white, compared to 66.6% in Kearns. Less than one-fourth of the County population speaks a language other than English at home (ibid). This diversity is a great asset for Kearns, distinguishing it from other areas of the County and metropolitan area.

**Figure R30: Racial Diversity in Kearns**



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018 – Table B02001.

**Figure R31: Languages Spoken in Kearns**



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018 – Table S1601.

## Social Determinants of Health

Did you know that in addition to biological factors, your health can be impacted by social determinants? Social determinants of health include, “the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age” and that influence health (Purpose Built Communities, 2019). The Healthy Utah Community Program encourages communities to address health inequities by working to improve the social and environmental conditions that contribute to poor health outcomes. The Healthy Utah Community Program promotes four key strategies for building better health for residents. These include:

- 1. Collaboration:** working collectively across disciplines and public and private sectors to improve capacity and effectiveness of health programs while reducing redundancies and repeated efforts.
- 2. Active Living:** encouraging residents to engage in daily physical activity by making improvements to the built environment to encourage walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation and recreation.
- 3. Access to Healthy Foods:** adopting policies and formulating projects that improve access to healthy and affordable foods, making it easier for Utah residents to meet daily recommended intakes for fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods that can reduce risk of disease and/or obesity.
- 4. Mental Health:** improving mental health awareness and equipping residents with tools needed to be resilient in order to minimize the prevalence and/or severity of mental health-related problems in Utah communities.

Kearns is currently pursuing all four of these strategies by completing a moderate-income housing plan and starting an active transportation plan, hosting a summer farmer’s market, and partnering with local organizations like Evidence2Success to improve the mental health and resiliency of Kearns’ youth and families. Additional actions to support the strategies outlined by The Healthy Utah Community Program are included in the work program at the end of this Element.

## Community Health

**Why do we include health data in the social infrastructure section?** Planners, health professionals, activists, and researchers increasingly recognize that there is a link between social infrastructure and community health (Force, 2016 and Purpose Built Communities, 2020). Particularly, feelings of inclusion, safety, connectedness, and empowerment (or voice) lead to better health outcomes such as mental health, reduced stress (and therefore, reduced blood pressure), and less participation in risky activities, such as smoking. Conversely, the absence of social infrastructure can lead to negative health outcomes. We include this section on health in social infrastructure because the two are intrinsically tied. As Kearns works to improve its social infrastructure, the community should experience improvements in health indicators. These changes may take place slowly over time, but they will have lasting impacts on future generations of Kearns residents.

Table R32 displays data from the Salt Lake County Health Department’s *Healthy Salt Lake 2020 Initiative – Kearns Community Profile*. Kearns scores worse than state averages on several of the community health indicators recorded by the Salt Lake County Health Department. Over 18% of Kearns adults cannot afford to see a doctor, which may lead to long-term health consequences (Table R32). This may be due to Kearns’ employment patterns; with retail being the top industry in which Kearns’ residents are employed, health coverage may be unattainable for many (Esri Business Analyst, 2020). However, it is important to note that Kearns residents participate in many preventative health programs, especially those that are free or low-cost. Adults in Kearns are more likely to wear a seatbelt than adults in Utah as a whole (Table R32). Kearns adults are also more likely to receive the influenza (flu) vaccine. This is encouraging because it demonstrates the willingness of Kearns’ residents to participate in health and life-safety measures available to them. Continuing to provide programs and resources will likely improve community health indicators in the long-term. During the pandemic, community partners rallied around the “Mask-Up Kearns” events to provide residents with the masks, equipment, and sanitary supplies they needed to fight the virus. Post-pandemic, these events could be extended to address other health concerns and community priorities, such as helping residents to quit smoking, or providing resources for dealing with anxiety and depression.

More recommendations for improving community health are included in the work program at the end of this Element.

**Table R32: Kearns Health Indicators**

Adults unable to afford to see a doctor	18.3%		worse compared to Utah counties
Colon Cancer screening (mixed indicators)	63.7%		worse compared to Utah counties
Mammogram (in past 2 years, for population 40+)	54.6%		better compared to Utah counties
Pap Smear (in past 3 years)	63.7%		average compared to Utah counties
Adults engaging in regular physical activity	16.0%		worse compared to Utah counties
Adults who are obese	31.2%		average compared to Utah counties; Kearns' females more likely to be obese
High blood pressure prevalence	27.1%		average compared to Utah counties; Kearns' males more likely to have high blood pressure
High cholesterol prevalence	28.0%		worse compared to Utah counties
Adults with Influenza vaccine	32.5%		better compared to Utah counties
Adults ever diagnosed with depression	28.0%		worse compared to Utah counties; depression diagnosis far more common for Kearns' females
Adults who visited a dentist	60.2%		worse compared to Utah counties
Adults with current asthma	11.5%		worse compared to Utah counties
Adults who smoke	16.8%		more prevalent than Utah counties
Adults who wear a seatbelt	92.7%		better compared to Utah counties

**Source:** MSD Long Range Planning, using data from Salt Lake County Health Department, 2020.

## Equity Planning

The word “equity” is used often throughout this Element. Equity is defined as “the quality of being fair or impartial” (Dictionary.com, 2021). Different from equality, which is based on providing the same to all (see Figure R33), equity recognizes individual differences and the unique needs that may arise from those differences. Equity planning is considered the act of evaluating planning decisions through the lens of how those decisions would impact the least advantaged residents in a community (Schneider, 2019). Equity planning can contribute to community resilience by strengthening the ability of all residents to adapt to sudden and long-term changes the community may face.

For example, in Portland, OR, principles of equity planning were applied in land use decisions to address the issue of displacement. Activists recognized that regional growth was having the unintended consequence of uprooting the region’s lowest income residents (through rising housing costs and / or redevelopment of low-income neighborhoods). Those activists worked together with planners and the community to mobilize those least advantaged residents to participate in planning and decision-making processes. The result in Portland was a new development review step which requires the preparation of a displacement analysis prior to major developments or zoning changes. This initiative was successful because it empowered the community to be a part of the solution. [Read the case study here.](#)

**Figure R33: Kearns Equality vs Equity**



## Equality      Equity

**Source:** Cultures of Dignity, 2020.

## Considering Equity

The panel to the left emphasizes the importance of examining equity as a fundamental component of a resilient community. Resilient communities work to ensure that health, wellbeing, and meaningful opportunities are available for all residents. When we purposefully identify inequities, we can better address gaps in our social, digital, and brick-and-mortar infrastructure systems. In other words, what are we investing in (or failing to invest in), and who does that help or harm? Few decisions can be made without some party experiencing ill effects, but considering equity in our decision-making helps us to ensure that negative impacts are minimal and that no one party is carrying the bulk of the burden.

Figure R34 looks at five equity indicators in Kearns: education, earnings, homeownership, transportation usage, and health (through the lens of COVID-19). We see that adult women in Kearns are more likely to be high school graduates than men (Figure R34). And White, Non-Hispanic residents have a greater educational attainment than residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino. A wage gap also exists in Kearns. Between men and women, this gap is \$8,000, with men earning more despite the greater educational attainment of women in Kearns (Figure R34). Between White, Non-Hispanic adults and adults identifying as Hispanic or Latino, the wage gap exceeds \$11,000, indicating greater economic opportunities for White, Non-Hispanic men (ibid).

In Salt Lake County, there are also inequities in homeownership. Homeownership rates are lower for minority households than for White households in general (Figure R34). However, in Kearns, a diverse population and lower than average housing costs have led to slightly higher rates of minority ownership than in the County as a whole. In 2013, minority homeownership in Kearns exceeded 30% (Figure R34). Homeownership is an important indicator because it is tied to, albeit not the only mechanism of, household wealth generation (Brookings Institute, 2020). It may also reveal inequities in lending processes or other real estate policies which tend to discriminate against persons of color (ibid).

Transportation usage varies among different members of Kearns’ population. Although this may not definitively indicate that an inequity exists, transportation usage is important when considering what transportation amenities to invest in. For example, in Kearns, men are more likely to drive alone, walk, or bike to work, while women are more

likely to take public transit, work from home, or carpool (Figure R34). To support equitable economic opportunities for women, the community may need to make improvements to bus stop infrastructure, establish carpooling lots, or boost the reliability of telecommunication systems.

Finally, the pandemic again revealed widespread inequities in Salt Lake County. Although residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino represent just 18.14% of the population, they have constituted 26.99% of all COVID-19 cases in Salt Lake County (Figure R34). This could be a symptom of poor access to healthcare, an inability to social distance or

buy protective gear, or a result of high employment of these individuals in retail trade, manufacturing, and transportation and warehousing – the industries that have had the most COVID-19 cases (SLCo Health, 2020). Understanding existing inequities helps us to work toward creative solutions that improve health, wellbeing, and access to opportunities for the entire community. We propose several solutions in the work program at the end of this Element. Equity issues can also come to light (and therefore start to be addressed) when all residents are empowered to participate in planning and decision-making processes. This is discussed in greater detail in the following pages.

**Figure R34: Kearns Equity Indicators**



**Education:** 80.4% of women over the age of 25 in Kearns are high school graduates or higher, while only 75.9% of men fit this category. Residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino have lower educational attainment than Kearns’ averages.



**Earnings:** In 2018, the median annual earnings of men in Kearns exceeded that of women by over \$8,000. The median income of White, non-Hispanic residents exceeded that of Hispanic residents by \$11,000.



**Homeownership:** In 2013, homeownership rates were lower for minority households than White households in Salt Lake County. While Kearns fared better than the County as a whole, minority homeownership just exceeded 30% (Bureau of Economic and Business Research – Utah, 2013).



**Transportation:** Transportation preferences vary among genders in Kearns. Women are more likely than men to carpool, take transit, or work from home. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to drive alone, bike, or walk.



**COVID-19:** Individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latino, although making up only 18.14% of the County population, have constituted 26.99% of all COVID-19 cases in Salt Lake County (SLCo Health, 2020). Most COVID outbreaks in the County have occurred at work sites, at K-12 Schools, or at Long Term Care Facilities (ibid).

**Other Sources:** ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018 (Tables: S2001, S1903, S1501, S0801)

**Source:** designed by MSD Long Range Planning, 2021.

## Government Accountability, Trust, and Opportunities to Get Involved in Decision-Making

Feeling empowered to speak up, to shape one's local community, and to have one's thoughts heard by leaders is an essential part of social infrastructure (Force, 2016). That sense of empowerment requires both the opportunity to get involved in the decision-making process and the presence of leaders and government officials who are accountable and trustworthy to their residents. Prior to Kearns' incorporation, there were limited opportunities to get involved in local decision making, which was concentrated at the central level (Salt Lake County) instead of the local level. Residents had some input through a community council, but its decision-making powers were limited.

Now that the community has incorporated and elected its own government body, residents have greater opportunity to get involved. Residents may run for the Kearns Council, sit on the Planning Commission, or volunteer to serve on the Community Council, which is a private non-profit entity that coordinates with the Kearns Council and the public on community matters. In addition, MSD staff have prioritized community-engagement in their planning processes, providing residents with greater ability to weigh in on General Plans, Capital Improvements Planning (CIP), and other planning and development endeavors. The MSD has striven to foster accountability and transparency by reporting out on projects, accomplishments, spending, and data collection – all of which can be found on the organization's website. Kearns' local government has also supported the ability of residents to get involved in decision-making, adopting the 2020 General Plan which encourages the formation of several working groups of volunteer residents to help implement Plan goals and policies.

Kearns residents demonstrate a willingness to participate in local government and civic processes. In 2020, the Kearns' self-response rate to the national census was 74.5%, which is 3.5% higher than the state response rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The MSD, in partnership with Kearns, is working on ways to further encourage resident involvement. In 2020, the MSD launched a Citizen Problem Reporter to allow residents to make service and maintenance complaints directly to enforcement officials through an online dashboard. As of April 2021, 44 reports had been submitted by Kearns' residents (MSD Citizen Problem Reporter, 2020), indicating that many residents are aware of and capable of accessing and using the tool.

Next steps for ensuring an accountable and trustworthy government, and one that residents feel safe and empowered to participate in, include:

1. Reaching out to and encouraging residents of all backgrounds to participate in boards, commissions, other government bodies, and volunteer groups to ensure a leadership that is representative of the community.
2. Ensuring that government documents and notices are available and easy to access in English, Spanish, and audio formats.
3. Monitoring government spending to reduce waste, find creative funding opportunities, and ensure that investments are consistent with Kearns' vision for the future.

Look to the work program at the end of this Element for more information about how Kearns plans to pursue each of these steps.

**Figure R35: Evidence 2 Success Kearns, Youth Council - Fundraiser to Feed Kearns**



**Source:** Evidence 2 Success Kearns, 2021.

**Figure R36: Kearns Residents at the 2019 Moderate Income Housing Workshop**



**Source:** Kearns Moderate Income Housing Plan, 2019.

## Addressing the Digital Divide

The “Digital Divide” describes social and economic inequity in terms of access to, use of, or impact of information technologies and communications infrastructure (Penn State, 2021). Access to digital infrastructure (that is, the physical ability to access, the know-how to use, and the ability to afford service) is crucial to ensuring resident access to opportunities. For example, residents may use information and communications technology to complete homework assignments, research and apply to colleges, or submit job applications. [More on the Digital Divide can be found in this guide from Penn State University.](#)

Several entities are addressing the Digital Divide in Kearns and the Greater Salt Lake Area. During the pandemic, Granite School District has offered Wifi Buses and free Wifi hot spots for use by students.

Another organization working on this issue is the Salt Lake County Public Library system. SLCo Libraries released over 250 hot spots for check-out during the pandemic, and now has a working group that continues to explore solutions for bridging the Digital Divide in the Salt Lake Valley.

Utah Communities Connect (UCC) describes its mission as “advancing digital equity” in Utah (UCC, 2021). The group shares maps displaying digital equity variables across Utah. Their website also provides a list of local plans and strategies that have addressed digital equity, including the [Salt Lake City Digital Equity Policy](#). In addition to maintaining online resources, UCC is active on-the-ground in communities, helping to host events which contribute to organizational goals (UCC, 2021):

- Highlighting needs and addressing opportunities in our communities to improve access to broadband, devices, and digital literacy training
- Bringing awareness to community members and stakeholders that could become digital inclusion advocates, and
- Creating organic opportunities to collaborate across sectors and support another.

Kearns can continue to close the Digital Divide by working with these partner organizations and communicating with residents about digital needs and preferences.

## Digital Infrastructure

### Overview

Digital infrastructure encompasses the physical assets needed to access and use technology for data processing, communications, knowledge sharing, and a host of other functions (Designing Buildings Wiki, 2020). This type of infrastructure is increasingly important for fostering interpersonal communications and connections and providing residents with economic and educational opportunities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, quality digital infrastructure became essential to community health and well-being, as residents shifted to remote work, online learning, virtual government meetings, and telemedicine. The pandemic has increased our reliance on digital infrastructure and underscored its importance for holistic community development.

At the time of this writing, 92.4% of Kearns’ households had access to the Internet at home, but only 89.8% of the population had used the Internet within the last 30 days (Esri Business Analyst, 2020 – Market Potential Report). While infrastructure to support Internet in Kearns is widespread, resident access may be hindered due to household financial constraints. Fiber Optic Internet is generally faster and more reliable than other types of service (AT&T, 2020). As of 2020, only 15.2% of Kearns’ households had access to Fiber Optic at home (Esri Business Analyst, 2020 – Market Potential Report). A few Fiber Optic providers, such as Utopia Fiber and Google Fiber, exist in the areas surrounding Kearns but have not yet extended full coverage to the community. In 2021, fiber cable was being laid along parts of 5400 S. This is expected to increase the availability of Fiber Optic Internet for Kearns residents in the future. Only 73.9% of Kearns’ households currently own a computer, which means that households may be accessing Internet from other devices (ibid).

Households without Internet service have few options for accessing public wifi. Only three public locations with free Internet service exist. Extending the availability of public wifi hot spots can help provide economic and educational opportunities to individuals who cannot afford a private connection. Students may particularly benefit from these locations, which may allow them to complete homework or research assignments even in the absence of home Internet. Granite School District, recognizing this need during the COVID-19 pandemic, started offering free wireless hotspots to families without Internet access (Granite School District, 2021). The District additionally provides technical support as needed to families as they navigate distance learning.

### Locations of publicly available wifi in Kearns:

- Kearns Library and the Salt Lake County Library System as a whole, which is also offering wireless hot-spots for check-out by County residents
- Kearns Oquirrh Park Fitness Center and the Utah Olympic Oval
- Granite School District (Wireless Hot Spot Program)

Social media use is prevalent in Kearns. Residents use these platforms to connect with friends and family members, advertise products and services, obtain news and event information, and learn new skills. Among the most common social media platforms, Facebook was the most frequently used by Kearns residents, with 66.9% of the population using the platform within the last 30 days (Esri Community Analyst, 2020 – Electronics and Internet Market Potential Report). This percentage was only slightly higher than that of Salt Lake County. In 2021, the top three most popular Facebook pages (by followers) among Kearns residents were K-Town, Unified Police Department Kearns Precinct, and the Kearns

Community Council. This data suggests that Kearns could tap into these social media networks to reach residents, as needed or desired. General Plan Steering Committee Members also noted growing use of the social media platform, Nextdoor. Data on the usage of this platform by Kearns residents is unavailable, but if anecdotal accounts are correct, Nextdoor may prove to be a useful tool for engaging with residents in the future.

### Percentage of Population that Used Social Media Platform in the last 30 days (top 5 by usage, Esri Community Analyst 2021)

1. Facebook: 66.9%
2. YouTube: 54.1%
3. Instagram: 36.5%
4. SnapChat: 24.6%
5. Pinterest: 20.1%

**Figure R37: Advertisement for Granite School District Wifi Bus Program**



In the Spring of 2020, soon after schools transitioned to distance learning, Granite School District sent buses around the communities it serves. The buses were configured with wifi hot spots and were parked around high-density residential areas to help boost wifi signal for students. Two buses were parked near Kearns, in Loder Park and Southridge Park.

**Source:** M. Chalmers, 2020.

## Official Kearns Methods of Communication

Kearns residents receive communications from their municipality, and can engage with planning and decision making, in several ways.

**Kearns Metro Township Website:** MSD Communications currently maintains the community's website. The site hosts valuable community information including information about local government meetings, staff contacts, the general plan and city code, and other important resources for residents.

**Unified Police Department Kearns Precinct Facebook Page:** The UPD Facebook Page for Kearns relays information related to crime, safety, and emergency management in the community. The page also advertises events with UPD involvement, such as the Mask-Up Kearns events or the 1,000 Reasons to Love Kearns food drive. UPD has a strong presence in Kearns and engages frequently with the community through Facebook.

**MSD Monthly E-Newsletter:** At the beginning of every month, the MSD emails a newsletter to Mayors, community leaders, staff, and members of the public who have joined the mailing list. The newsletter highlights MSD projects from across Salt Lake County, answers frequently asked questions, and provides important event dates and announcements.

**MSD Citizen Problem Reporter:** The Citizen Problem Reporter (Figure R38) allows residents in communities served by the MSD to report problems with code enforcement, maintenance, waste, parks and recreation, zoning and building compliance, or other issues. On the back end of the platform, MSD staff can see the location of reported issues and track progress toward compliance. The Citizen Problem Reporter provides residents with a mechanism for communicating directly with staff and local leaders regarding the problems they see in their communities.

**Kearns Long Range Planning Hub Site:** In addition to the Metro Township Website, Kearns has a Long Range Planning Hub Site operated through the MSD. This website organizes Kearns' various planning documents and initiatives, provides information on getting involved in planning processes, and shares valuable data and resources. Visitors to the website have the option to follow the page and receive notifications when the site is updated.

## Informal Community Methods of Communication

Residents communicate with one another, post event information, and receive news updates from other informal sources. While these are not official methods of communication, Kearns may occasionally tap into these networks to advertise community happenings.

**Kearns High School – The Cougar Claw:** Students at Kearns High School help to run The Cougar Claw, a student news site. The site features stories on topics including student life, community, and local sports. Stories include everything from wind storms and air quality to the high school's debate team and student opinion pieces.

**Kearns Community Council Facebook Page:** The Kearns Community Council operates a Facebook page in addition to their [Website](#). The Facebook page is more frequently updated and advertises local events and programs to assist residents, such as the Senior Center Meal Program.

**K-Town Facebook Page:** This page is run by residents and has no affiliation with the local government or any community groups. Residents use the page to share events and news, ask questions, connect with other residents, and advertise products for sale. It is the most popular Facebook Page among Kearns' residents. Residents have occasionally used this page to report suspicious activity. We remind the community that reports should instead be made to UPD so that they can be recorded and investigated.

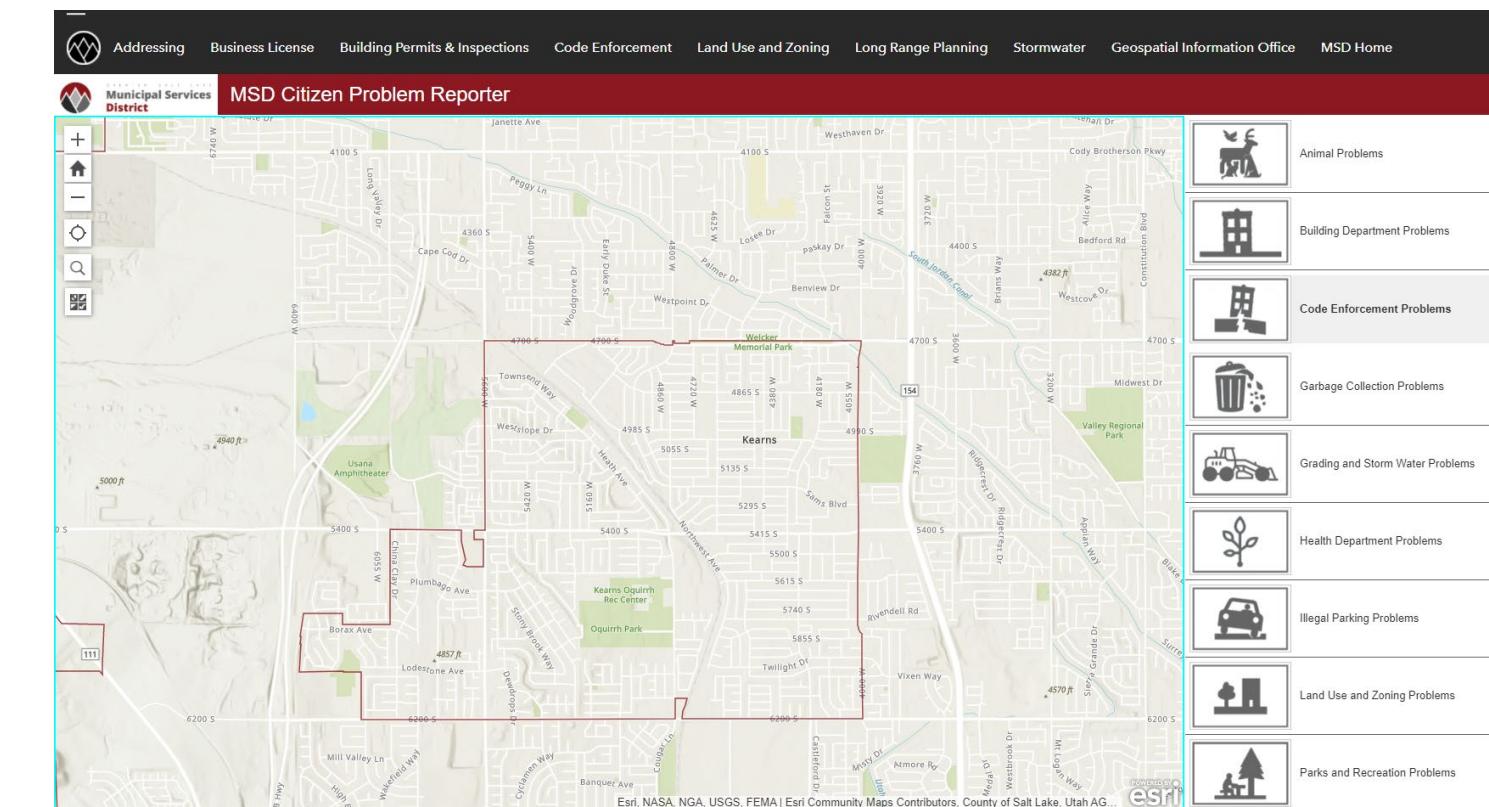
**Utility Newsletters:** Various utility providers in Kearns send out regular communications to customers. For example, the Kearns Improvement District (KID) attaches a bulletin to their monthly billing statements. The bulletin includes announcements, water conservation tips, and other news or reminders.

**Local TV, Radio, and Journal News Services:** Kearns residents may also receive communications from local TV, radio, or journal news sources. The Salt Lake Tribune, Deseret News, and KSL remain popular for journal news and classifieds, while KUTV, ABC4, and Fox13Now provide on-air coverage. Several radio stations cover the Greater Salt Lake area, including Kearns.

Although there are several methods of communication available to Kearns residents and local leaders, the community lacks a centralized platform for sharing news, information, and events. A community calendar could help to organize the efforts of Kearns' many organizations and political entities into one space, improving ease of access for residents. In the meantime, existing platforms, especially popular Kearns' Facebook pages, can be used for engaging the community in local events and decision-making. It is unclear what role each of these existing communication systems would have in the event of an emergency. However, Kearns is currently partnering with the MSD to prepare a

Continuity of Operations Plan (expected to be complete in 2021) which would outline the process for organizing resources and personnel and communicating essential information to residents. Other communities have employed emergency notification systems, like [CodeRED](#) in [Emigration Canyon](#). These systems may be feasible for Kearns and should be explored through future hazard and emergency planning efforts.

**Figure R38: Screen View of the Citizen Problem Reporter Tool**



**Source:** Greater Salt Lake MSD, 2021.

## America's Aging Infrastructure

Infrastructure is critical to the continued success of the economy and wellbeing of residents. Roads and bridges allow for the transport of goods and people. Broadband networks support e-commerce and communications. Electric grids sustain production and allow residents to cook dinner at night or tune into their favorite shows. As a society, we rely heavily on this system of infrastructure. But what happens when that system fails? Most of the United States' critical infrastructure was built several decades ago and has not received the investment needed to maintain it (Council of Foreign Relations, 2020).

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave Utah's overall infrastructure system a C+ grade in 2020; this means that our infrastructure is "mediocre and requires attention" (Utah Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers, 2020, p.7). Even so, Utah's infrastructure is rated better than any other state in the nation (Canham, 2021). While our roads, bridges, and transit scored well on the report card (B+), our canals (D+) and levees (D-) received low scores (*ibid*). It is estimated that there are between 5,300 and 8,000 miles of canals throughout the State of Utah; many of these were constructed over one-hundred years ago and have not been maintained, due to dwindling local funding or a lack of data about the canals' design, construction, and condition (*ibid*). There is a history of canal failure in Utah, with the most recent example being the North Jordan Canal through Murray in 2013 (*ibid*). These failures can lead to flooding, property damage, and loss of life. The Utah Salt Lake Canal runs through the very northeastern portion of Kearns, meaning that this statewide problem is also felt in the local community. While there are no levees present in Kearns, their essential function of holding back flood waters, impacts the entire region. The failure of levees along the Jordan River, for example, could lead to flood damage in Salt Lake City, where many Kearns residents commute to work. Like Utah's canals, the levees were constructed long ago and data on conditions is not always available.

The future success of our communities may depend on upkeeping and updating these aging infrastructure systems. Where the funding for such updates would come from is yet unclear.

## Brick and Mortar Infrastructure

### Medical Facilities

There are no medical facilities located in Kearns at the time of this writing. However, several facilities exist just outside the community boundaries. The Kearns Clinic, which was found in the commercial plaza at the intersection of 6200 S and Cougar Lane, offered family medicine, pediatrics, mental health integration, and primary care. However, Intermountain Health closed this location in 2020. The Children's Center was previously located in Kearns and provided mental health care to infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. The Center's Kearns location consolidated with the Salt Lake City branch during the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is expected that the Children's Center will return to Kearns in the future. Two Walgreens stores (6200 S and 5415 S) and one Harmon's Grocery (6200 S) provide pharmacy services for the community.

The nearest hospital to Kearns is Jordan Valley Medical Center located 3.2 miles away in West Valley City. Intermountain Medical Center in Murray is also close, at just 6.4 miles away. In addition to these hospitals, an urgent care facility is accessible directly northeast of Kearns in Taylorsville. Each of these facilities can be accessed via direct bus route from Kearns.

The University of Utah Wellness Bus occasionally provides services in Kearns. The Kearns Library has been hosting the Bus weekly and plans to continue to do so in the future. During the pandemic, the Wellness Bus filled in to provide COVID testing to the Greater Salt Lake area. Post-pandemic, the Wellness Bus will return to preventative health services, such as health screening, lifestyle coaching, nutrition education, and referrals. Learn more about the Wellness Bus [here](#).

### Roads and Traffic Control Infrastructure

There are approximately 101 miles of paved road in Kearns. 4.6 miles of roadway are owned by UDOT (5400 S and 5600 W), while 4.0 miles are county-owned (portions of the Warehouse District and 6200 S). The remaining roadway is owned by Kearns or adjacent municipalities. In total, Kearns owns 88.0 miles of Class B and C Roads (see Appendix), which are funded through the State's Class B and C Road Account based on the municipality's relative population and roadway mileage.

Poor roads and potholes were identified during the APAE analysis as an item that residents seek to 'eliminate'. Residents perceive that there are roads currently not being maintained

and would like to resolve this. Recent projects, such as the repaving of 4700 S, have sought to widen Kearns' roadways and add active transportation infrastructure. However, maintenance of Kearns' residential streets remains a challenge. Moving forward, funding should be set aside for maintenance, roadway and utility projects should be coordinated to prevent waste, and the Municipality should invest in long-lasting, weather-resistant roadway materials. Many of these strategies can be incorporated during the annual preparation of the Capital Improvement Project list. In 2021, Kearns is set to receive capital improvement funding for curb and sidewalk repair along 5615 S, traffic calming in various residential locations, and widening and improvement of 4700 S ([Greater Salt Lake MSD, 2020](#)). Other paving projects may occur as a part of the operations budget or through awarded grant funding.

### Railroad and Crossings

The D&RGW Garfield Branch railroad (formerly owned by Union Pacific, and now leased by UTA, with freight rights owned by Savage Services) runs through Kearns, splitting the Municipality into east and west halves. The railroad remains active and is used for freight transport between Fogarty Yard just west of Magna and the Welby Roundhouse in West Jordan. The line connects to other rail lines in the Salt Lake Valley. There are no stops or rail spurs in Kearns, and roads only cross the line in three places in Kearns:

- **At 4700 S**, the intersection is marked with a crossbar and flashing lights. However, there is no pedestrian infrastructure in this location. The crossing is best used by automobiles. This is the closest crossing to the Warehouse District.
- **At 5415 S/5400 S**, the railroad tracks are raised above the roadway so there is no interference with traffic. Vehicles pass under a bridge to avoid the tracks. Sidewalks line both sides of the street at this crossing, making it safe for pedestrians (although not necessarily comfortable, given the high traffic volume). This is the closest formal crossing to Kearns High School.
- **At 6200 S**, the intersection is marked with a crossbar and flashing lights, in addition to a stop bar painted on the ground to direct drivers. Sidewalks exist on both sides of the street at this crossing. 6200 S is the nearest crossing to Harmon's Grocery and Carrington Square.

In the event that a train were to become stuck on the rail line through Kearns, blocking intersections at 4700 S or 6200 S, the community would still be able to pass from east to west via 5415/5400 S. However, with only two formal pedestrian crossings, the rail significantly limits community connectivity. The lack of crossings has encouraged many people to cross the tracks at informal locations, which is both illegal and dangerous. This is discussed in greater detail in the Transportation Chapter of the General Plan as well as in the Kearns Master Transportation Plan.

In the future, should freight transport on the tracks become obsolete, members of the General Plan Steering Committee expressed interest in repurposing the tracks for public transit (such as TRAX) or a linear park, featuring a multi-use trail (see the example in Figure R39). Currently, the tracks are only used by Savage Services a couple of times per week, so reuse of the space in the long-term is a likely possibility.

**Figure R39: Historic Union Pacific Rail Trail State Park**



This trail from Park City to Echo Reservoir follows the historic route of the Union Pacific Rail Line. The trail opened to the public in 1992 and enjoys use by residents and visitors alike.

**Source:** Rails-to-trails Conservancy, 2010.

## Sewer and Water

**Water Sources:** Kearns receives its water and wastewater services from the Kearns Improvement District (KID), with the exception of the community's southeast quadrant, which receives service from the Taylorsville-Bennion Improvement District (TBID). While KID relies almost primarily on the regional wholesaler, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, for water, TBID relies primarily on its twelve local wells. Any additional water needed is purchased through Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District (JVWCD). JVWCD obtains eighty percent (80%) of its water from three reservoirs (Upper Provo River Reservoirs, Jordanelle Reservoir, and Deer Creek Reservoir) and twenty percent (20%) from groundwater sources accessed through wells (Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, 2021). These sources are replenished with precipitation, and particularly by snow melt. During the writing of this document, Utah was experiencing a severe drought leading to dry soils (and shrinking groundwater sources) and reduced snowpack. An article released by the Salt Lake Tribune in January of 2021 reported that the state had only received 56% of its average precipitation for the studied time period (Maffly, 2021). Without precipitation and runoff from the spring's melting snowpack, reservoirs and groundwater sources cannot replenish. This leads to water scarcities and forces local governments to implement policies to reduce water usage. As the climate continues to change, drought years may become more frequent, placing increasing pressure on local communities to mitigate climate change and adapt via policies and programs that promote water-wise practices. Strategies applicable to Kearns are outlined in the work program.

**Water Quality:** Both KID and TBID publish annual reports of water quality. In the latest reports (2019), neither district violated the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s standards for the concentration of contaminants in water (Kearns Improvement District, 2019; Taylorsville-Bennion Improvement District, 2019). Continuous monitoring helps to ensure that drinking water is safe for area residents. Local governments, activists, researchers, and water providers also collaborate to ensure that water is protected at the source. This includes regulating recreational activities near water sources, educating the public on the potential household contaminants and runoff, and advocating for water-wise practices (those practices that reduce water waste by using only what is absolutely needed).

**Sewer Service:** Both KID and TBID collect wastewater, which gets sent to Central Valley Water Reclamation Center (CVWRC) for treatment. The facility treats 50-60 million gallons of wastewater daily, returning treated water to the Jordan River (CVWRC, 2021). As wastewater and liquid food waste undergo the anaerobic digestion process during treatment, the CVWRC captures methane gas and uses it to produce energy to power part of the facility operations (CVWRC, 2021). Additionally, a portion of incoming biosolids are separated and combined with woodchips to produce compost available for purchase by the public (ibid). The facility was originally constructed in the 1980s, but since has been updated to meet changing Department of Water Quality (DWQ) requirements and increase capacity.

### Stormwater Infrastructure and Management

Kearns is permitted by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (Utah DEQ) to discharge stormwater into state waters under a shared permit with other Jordan Valley Municipalities. The permit was last updated in February of 2020 and permits stormwater and limited non-stormwater (landscape irrigation, foundation drains, dechlorinated swimming pool drainage, individual residential car washing, etc.) discharges. One criteria of the permit is the preparation of a Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP). The [SWMP for Salt Lake County](#) was last updated in 2018.

In Salt Lake County, stormwater is discharged to several impaired water bodies, including the Jordan River, Little and Big Cottonwood Creeks, Mill Creek, Emigration Creek, and Parley's Canyon Creek (Salt Lake County, 2018). Impaired water bodies are defined as water bodies that are not meeting their designated beneficial use (recreation, drinking water, wildlife, etc.) due to pollution, sedimentation, or other human-induced conditions (Utah DEQ, 2021). To reduce pollution of these water bodies, the County must follow best practices in the management of storm water. The County has focused primarily on education and outreach as a method to discourage illicit (forbidden / outside of the scope of the stormwater permit) discharges and improve resident care of regional water bodies (ibid). In addition, the County monitors priority stormwater drains in dry weather to check for illegal discharges; prioritized drains may include those in commercial or industrial areas, upstream of sensitive water bodies, located in areas with older infrastructure or with a

history of illicit discharges, or in areas with onsite sewage disposal systems (ibid). Because there are ordinances in place making illicit discharge illegal, enforcement can be brought upon perpetrators.

The Warehouse District (also referred to as the Camp Kearns area) of Kearns has a reputation for illegal dumping of junk and hazardous materials. Since the community incorporated in 2017, it has seen increased enforcement on these properties. The MSD has received few complaints about illegal dumping in recent years, and in fact, not a single report of illegal dumping in the Warehouse District has been submitted via the Citizen Problem Reporter since it was launched in 2020. However, the issue was still raised during the December 2019 Community Workshop (see Figures R4 and R5). Illegal dumping occurring in this area is particularly alarming since many of the businesses produce hazardous wastes as a part of their production process. Waste management in this area should continue to be monitored to ensure that businesses are complying with local, state, and federal regulations.

Other ways to better manage stormwater and maintain and/or improve the quality of our water bodies include limiting development in areas susceptible to erosion (such as on high slopes), minimizing disturbance to native vegetation and soils, and protecting existing wetlands, sensitive water bodies, and natural areas (Salt Lake County, 2018). Data on drinking water quality can be found in an earlier section of this Element, where we discuss services provided by the Kearns Improvement District (KID).

### Waste Management Infrastructure

Kearns receives waste management services from Wasatch Front Waste & Recycling District. The District collects waste, recycling, and compost and brings it to one of three facilities: the Trans Jordan Landfill or Salt Lake Valley Landfill (waste) and Rocky Mountain Recycling.

- Trans Jordan Landfill (Type 1 Facility):** The Trans Jordan Landfill has served the Salt Lake area since 1958. It spreads an area over 190 acres in size. The Landfill participates in a methane-recovery program through a partnership with Granger Energy (Trans Jordan, 2021). The Landfill has an expected remaining

capacity of 10,300,926 tons and an expected remaining lifespan of 18 years (Utah DEQ, 2020 A). The Trans Jordan Landfill is located seven miles southwest of Kearns. Post-closure, the land will be properly covered, revegetated, and repurposed to serve a use consistent with the South Jordan Future Land Use Map (ibid). The City's most recent future land use map depicts this area as transitioning to a mix of residential, employment center, and recreational uses (City of South Jordan, 2020).

- Salt Lake Valley Landfill (Type 1 Facility):** The Salt Lake Valley Landfill began taking waste in 1993. It extends nearly 450 acres. In more recent years, the landfill has begun to produce compost certified by the U.S. Composting Council (UCC). The Salt Lake Valley Landfill has a remaining capacity of 29 million tons and an anticipated remaining lifespan of 25 years (Utah DEQ, 2020 B). This landfill is located approximately six miles north of Kearns. Post-closure, the site is anticipated to be properly covered and revegetated to support native wildlife and passive recreation uses, as well as environmental stewardship through educational signage (ibid).
- Rocky Mountain Recycling:** Rocky Mountain Recycling has been in business for over 20 years. While the company is based in Salt Lake City, it provides services in eleven states including Utah. Rocky Mountain Recycling reports recycling tens of thousands of tons of materials per month and receiving significant press attention for its positive environmental impact (Rocky Mountain Recycling, 2021). There is no available data about the lifespan of Rocky Mountain Recycling's facilities.

## Residential Housing Stock

There are 10,086 housing units in Kearns (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018 – Table DP04). Of these units, 79.4% are owner-occupied, 18.9% are renter-occupied, and 1.7% are vacant (see Figure R42 on the next page). The majority of homes are single-family detached (Figure R40). The median year built of all housing units in Kearns is 1975, with 62% of all homes having been built prior to 1980 (Figure R42).

Both rents and monthly owner-costs have increased in Kearns since 2010, although increases to owner costs have been far less significant (Figure R42). Overall, housing costs in Kearns are rising at a slower rate than in Salt Lake County as a whole. With a median home value of \$183,600, Kearns remains one of the most affordable markets for homeownership in the Valley (Figure R42). However, as evidenced by Figure R40, housing choice in Kearns is limited. Few opportunities exist for multi-generational living, single person households, or renters. Those who cannot afford homeownership may struggle to find other housing opportunities in Kearns. As of 2019, the vacancy rate for residential units in Kearns was only 2.1% (compared to 5.4% in Salt Lake County), demonstrating the competitiveness of the community's rental market (ACS 5-Year Estimates 2019 – Table DP04).

Although the cost of housing in Kearns is cheaper than in other parts of Salt Lake County, a significant proportion of Kearns' population is housing cost-burdened. Figure R41 shows the percentage of households that are spending less than 20% of their income on housing (not cost-burdened), spending between 20% and 29% of their income on housing (at risk of becoming cost-burdened), and spending 30% or more of their income on housing (cost-burdened) by income bracket. The bracket with income less than \$20,000 had the highest percentage of households that were cost-burdened (Figure R41). The percentage of cost-burdened households decreases in higher income brackets. However, some portion of households at every income level were spending over 30% of their income on housing.

**Figure R40: Kearns' Housing Types**

	<b>Single-Family Detached</b> 9,216 occupied units (92.9%) Primarily owner-occupied. (Laura Koester, 2020)
	<b>Single-Family Attached</b> 125 occupied units (1.3%) Primarily owner-occupied. (Example from Montebello at Liberty Village Plans, 2020)
	<b>Duplex</b> 27 occupied units (0.3%) Primarily renter-occupied. (Rentler, 2020)
	<b>5+ Apartment Building</b> 383 occupied units (3.9%) Primarily renter-occupied. (Rentler, 2020)
	<b>Mobile Home/Other</b> 167 occupied units (1.7%) Primarily owner-occupied. (Realtor.com, 2020)

**Source:** Data from 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

In the lowest income brackets, spending less than 30% of income on housing may be near impossible for households. As Figure R41 shows, households making less than \$20,000 (of which there are 558 in Kearns) can only afford to spend a maximum of \$500 a month on housing costs. The median monthly gross rent and median monthly owner costs in the Metro Township both exceed this amount.

In total, over a quarter of Kearns' households (27.8%) are housing cost-burdened (ACS 5-Year Estimates 2018, Table S2503). When households spend over 30% of their income on housing, they must forego other critical expenses including food, transportation, and healthcare (Desmond, 2016). An emergency expense may prevent cost-burdened households from being able to make their housing payment, leading to eviction or foreclosure. Fortunately, formal evictions remain low in Kearns. In 2016, records show that 18 households were evicted from their homes (Eviction Lab, 2020). Among small cities and rural areas, Kearns ranks 1,004th for its eviction rate (ibid). Data on informal evictions is unavailable at this time. The [Kearns Moderate Income Housing Plan \(2019\)](#) provides several strategies for preserving affordable housing and addressing the mismatch between resident wages and housing costs.

**Figure R41: Cost-Burden Analysis for Households in Kearns, by Income Group**

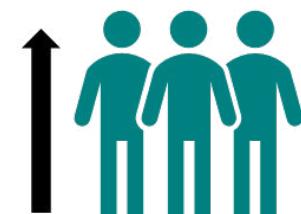
Income Bracket	Percent of Bracket Spending Less Than 20% Income on Housing	Percent of Bracket Spending 20-29% Income on Housing	Percent of Bracket Spending 30% or More Income on Housing	Max Amount Household Can Afford to Spend on Housing per Month
<b>Less than \$20,000</b>	1.8%	14.3%	83.9%	\$500.00
<b>\$20,000 to \$34,999</b>	25.8%	8.9%	65.3%	\$874.98
<b>\$35,000 to \$49,999</b>	22.8%	25.7%	51.5%	\$1,249.98
<b>\$50,000 to \$74,999</b>	33.2%	42.7%	24.1%	\$1,874.98
<b>\$75,000 or more</b>	77.0%	22.2%	0.8%	-

**Source:** Data from 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S2503.

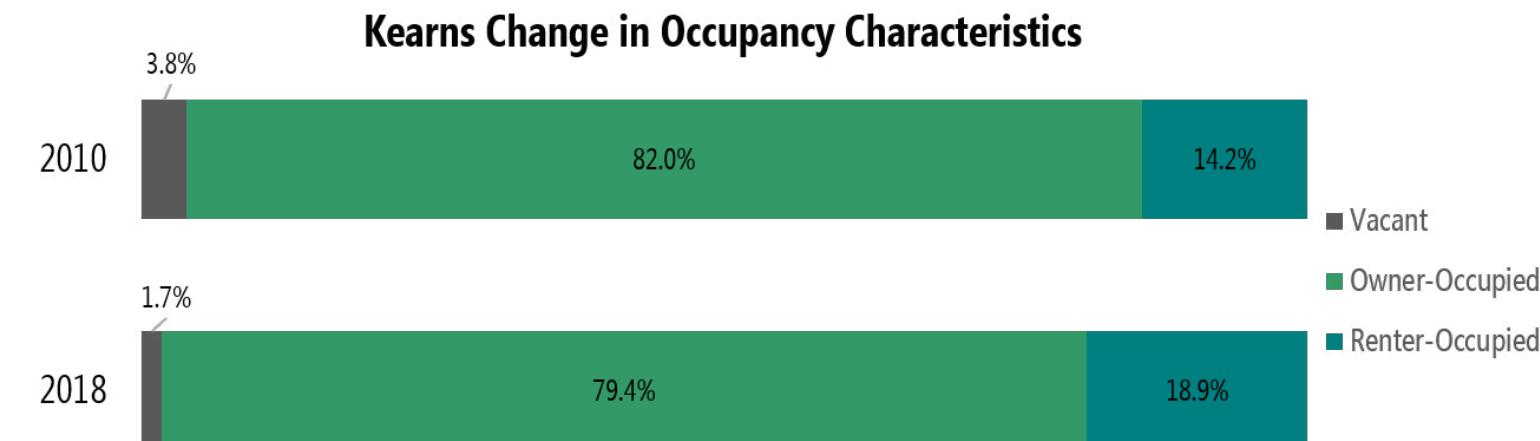
Figure R42: Kearns Housing Infographic

# State of the Housing Market

\*Data from ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010 and 2018 (Tables DP04 and S2503)



Average household size is increasing! In 2018, the average household included 3.8 people. Elsewhere in SLCo, household size is decreasing.



Between 2010 and 2018, vacancy rates decreased. The percentage of renter-occupied housing units increased, while owner-occupied units decreased.



The median year built of homes in Kearns is 1975. Over 62% of homes were built prior to 1980! But the age of the housing stock is decreasing overall.

### Median Monthly Gross Rent



Monthly rents are higher in Kearns than in SLCo, but rents are rising at a faster rate in the county than the Metro Township.

### 2018 Median Home Value



Home values are increasing but remain below the county median.

### Median Monthly Owner Costs



Monthly owner costs for households with a mortgage are lower in Kearns and increasing at a slower pace than rents.

## Challenges of an Aging Housing Stock

Because Kearns' housing stock is aged, the community is at greater risk for disaster damage due to unreinforced masonry, and long-term impacts due to lead paint. Homes built prior to 1975 are unlikely to meet modern seismic codes. The use of unreinforced masonry in construction puts these buildings at greater risk for earthquake damage. As of 2019, 35.9% of housing units in Kearns were built prior to 1970, and 24.6% were built between 1970 and 1980 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 - Table B25034). After a 5.7 magnitude earthquake originating in Magna, UT struck on March 18th, 2020, over 35 damage reports were submitted from Kearns' residents, ranging from façade damage, to foundational cracks, to broken sidewalks (MSD Damage Assessment Form, 2020).

The old age of Kearns' housing stock also puts residents at risk for lead paint exposure. Lead paint was commonly used in the United States until 1978. With 60.5% of Kearns' housing stock being built prior to 1980, it is important that residents be educated about lead paint risk and mitigation programs. Risk is even higher in units built prior to 1950, of which there are 241 in Kearns (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 – Table B25034). When lead paint enters the bloodstream, particularly through inhalation (perhaps as a child chews on a toy with lead paint dust particles on it), it is absorbed into the bones and stays there, accumulating over time (Salt Lake County, 2021). Elevated lead levels in the bloodstream can cause damage to the brain and nervous system, slow growth, lead to behavioral issues, and cause other permanent ailment (ibid). Households can reduce risk of exposure by:

1. Having their home tested for lead paint at the time of purchase.
2. Frequently and thoroughly cleaning the home, especially after remodeling or other activities that may cause disturbance to old layers of lead paint.
3. Working to mitigate risk by assessing conditions and making repairs to windows, door jams, and other surfaces as needed. Salt Lake County offers lead-paint mitigation at no cost for qualifying households. Check out this link for more information: <https://slco.org/lead-safe-housing/qualify-for-free-services/services/>.

Finally, Kearns' aging housing stock has implications for the ability of residents to live in the community during all stages of life. Much of the housing stock was not built to be accessible for persons with mobility disabilities. In fact, split level homes, which require individuals to walk up stairs to reach the kitchen, bathrooms, and bedrooms, are one of the most prevalent housing types in Kearns (2020 Google Maps Assessment, see example in Figure R43). Retrofits of existing homes may be needed to accommodate older members of the population or persons with disabilities in the future. Summit Senior Housing near Walgreens in Kearns is currently the only provider of senior and accessible living in the community. Salt Lake County Aging and Adult Services advertises a home adaptation service provided in collaboration with their partners ([SLCo Aging & Adult Services, 2021](#)), but there are few other programs available at this time. Kearns residents can make a difference in their community by checking in on neighbors, sharing tools and skills, and connecting fellow residents with resources as available.

**Figure R43: Example of a Typical Split Level Home in Kearns (Exterior and Interior)**



Reeder Asset Management - Salt Lake City



Reeder Asset Management - Salt Lake City

**Source:** Trulia, 2021

## Cascading Events

While this Element addresses several hazards and long-term changes which may impact Kearns, it is important to recognize that we cannot always plan for all events or outcomes. This was made evident by recent events in Texas, where a rare winter storm (hazardous enough on its own) drove up demand for energy and ultimately led to a regional power outage (even impacting major cities like Houston and Austin). Residents found themselves unable to heat their homes during the cold temperatures and in some instances lost water access due to bursting pipes. As if that were not enough, the world was continuing to battle the COVID-19 pandemic during this time, making large gatherings (in warming shelters for example) unsafe - not to mention any hindrance to the administration of tests and treatment. [You can read more about these events here.](#)

What happened in Texas underscores the importance of examining our infrastructure systems and ability to adapt prior to disaster striking. Across the nation, various organizations grappled with the question of how to prevent similar cascading disasters from occurring in their own communities. Some of the themes included:

- Diversifying energy sources so that failure of one source does not cause system collapse ([Houk, 2021](#)).
- Committing to climate change mitigation, recognizing that climate change is leading to greater frequency and intensity of severe weather events ([Bloomberg, 2021](#)), and
- Regularly collecting, updating, and sharing data in order to more effectively recognize patterns and predict events ([Nuccitelli, 2021](#)).

**Figure R44: Waiting in Line for Groceries During Power Outage and Cold Spell in Austin, TX (2021).**



Source: The Guardian, 2021.

## Resilience in the Face of Hazards and Long-Term Changes

We cannot begin to plan for all the future scenarios Kearns may face. Twenty years ago, who would have expected the need to address autonomous vehicles in a Plan? Smartphones and Instagram did not exist. Those who warned of a future pandemic were unheard by mainstream society. To begin to guess what could happen in a decade seems unfathomable when we still cannot predict the impacts of the COVID pandemic occurring today. While this Element cannot address all future possibilities, it starts a conversation about opportunities and threats and what the community can do to adapt to and thrive in an ever-changing world. Short of all the answers, we do our best to leverage assets and create a strategy for the seen and unseen.

### Natural and Human-Induced Hazards

According to the 2019 Salt Lake County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan - Kearns Annex, the top five hazards according to probability of occurrence and expected impact were:

1. **Earthquake:** in 2020, a magnitude 5.7 earthquake struck in Magna, causing damage throughout Salt Lake County, including Kearns. Because many structures in the community were built prior to 1975, and thus were built using unreinforced masonry, the potential impact of earthquakes is high. An earthquake could also disrupt communication and transportation networks. The Hazard Mitigation Plan recommends seismic retrofitting of Kearns buildings, including residential, civic, and other structures.
2. **Severe Winter Weather:** Winter Storms are frequent throughout the Salt Lake Valley. For the most part, Kearns is well-equipped to deal with these storms. However, severe winter weather can still pose a risk, particularly if snow impacts major transportation systems or causes power outages which could leave residents exposed to cold temperatures and freezing and bursting pipes. The Hazard Mitigation Plan has few recommended actions for mitigating severe winter weather. However, the 2020 General Plan encourages the establishment of a volunteer program to shovel snow from residential sidewalks and bus stops, as well as the future identification of potential sites for heating and cooling centers during emergencies.

3. **Severe Weather:** Severe Weather in general is also identified as a hazard, whether that be wind and dust storms, poor air quality days, severe thunder storms, hail, or some other event. Mitigation strategies are dependent on the type of weather received.

4. **Public Health Epidemic / Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic showed the world that even in the time of modern-medicine, humans are not immune from widespread illnesses. At the time of this writing, Kearns had experienced 5,057 cases of COVID-19, representing 13.7% of the entire population of Kearns and comprising 3.7% of all cases in Salt Lake County (SLCo COVID-19 Data Dashboard). Although public health epidemics / pandemics were identified as a top hazard for Kearns when the Hazard Mitigation Plan was written in 2019, no mitigation or adaptation strategies were presented for addressing such an event. Perhaps the thought of a mass pandemic, though a possibility, still seemed beyond imagination.

5. **Hazardous Materials Incident:** The Hazard Mitigation Plan only includes asbestos removal in its discussion of hazardous material incident mitigation. However, the threat extends beyond asbestos. Several businesses in Kearns' Warehouse District are identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as active or inactive hazardous waste sites (EnviroAtlas, 2021). These businesses are important to Kearns, but ongoing enforcement and education will be needed to ensure the health of residents and success of local businesses.

Others potential hazards identified by the Hazard Mitigation Plan include flooding, cyber attack, civil disturbance, terrorism, radon/asbestos, drought, tornado, wildfire, dam failure, and landslides. By working now to enhance Kearns' social, digital, and brick-and-mortar infrastructure, and improving community resiliency, the community is taking major steps toward ensuring that it can recover from and adapt to any changes or hazards that the future may bring.

**Figure R45: Section from the Winter Parking Enforcement Brochure Sent to Kearns Residents in 2020**



Source: Greater Salt Lake MSD Communications Team, 2020.

## What is Social Equity?

Policy Link defines equity as “just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential” (American Planning Association, 2021). Social equity, thus, can be taken to mean just and fair inclusion and ability to participate in social relations, networking, and community-building. The planning profession has a history of worsening social inequities, namely through the disruption of communities during urban renewal projects or discriminatory redlining processes. Visit this website to learn more about past redlining practices and their lingering impacts in Salt Lake City: [Historic Utah](#).

This Element takes care to consider social inequities in its recommendations and strengthen the bonds that hold the Kearns community together. The Kearns community is stronger when its individual residents can reach their full potential and work together for the common good. Kearns already benefits from a robust network of social infrastructure, as described in previous sections of this Element. Responding to long-term societal and economic changes will help the community to maintain that infrastructure and promote social equity.

## What is Kearns doing to promote social equity and the ability of all residents to fully participate in civic processes?

- Preparing resource guides, engagement materials, and other important documents in both English and Spanish languages.
- Using a variety of methods to collect feedback from residents to improve planning and decision-making. Such as online and printed surveys, community workshops, virtual events, customer service over the phone, and more.
- Working with community partners to reach residents where they are at. We have plugged into utility newsletters, annual community events (such as the Kearns Easter drive-thru in 2021), and the High School's *Cougar Claw* to engage with and learn how to better support our residents. We are even providing residents with an opportunity to get involved with implementation of the General Plan through working groups, no experience needed.

## Resilience in a Changing World

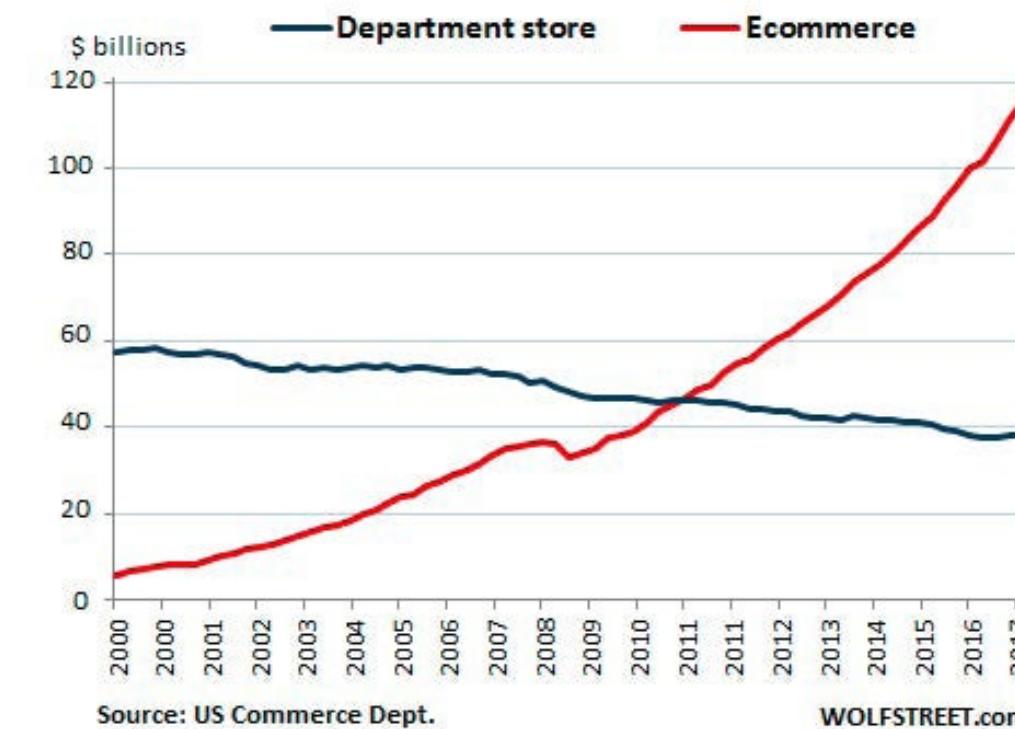
Sudden events and natural disasters are not the only challenges that a community may face. Long-term changes in societal structure, the economy, the built environment, and even the climate can have an impact on the success of a municipality. How Kearns responds to these changes, and others yet to be predicted, will determine its future. This section is meant to spark ideas, but is not exhaustive of all the societal, economic, or environmental changes Kearns is likely to experience.

**E-Commerce:** It is no secret that Americans are increasingly turning to online retail and services to fill their needs. Figure R46 shows that between 2000 and 2017, e-commerce sales greatly increased, while department store sales steadily decreased. During COVID-19, e-commerce began to comprise an even larger percentage of total U.S. sales (see Figure R47). Kearns is not immune to this trend; in 2020, over half (52.3%) of Kearns residents had used the Internet in the last month to make an online purchase (Esri Business Analyst, 2020 - Electronics and Internet Market Potential). During that same time frame, 12.1% of residents had used the Internet to make a business purchase (*ibid*).

The shift to e-commerce has several implications for Kearns. First, growing online sales (and shrinking in-store sales) are resulting in changing infrastructure needs. Space previously needed for large retail displays, parking, or even loading and unloading could be re-designed or converted for other purposes. This is described in greater detail in the 'Changing Built Environment' Section of this Element. Another implication of the e-commerce trend is the need for widespread access to reliable, fast Internet service. Access to the Internet is increasingly needed for educational purposes, retail opportunities, and access to services – such as travel planning, online banking, and even telemedicine. Additionally, e-commerce provides some evidence of the need for robust digital infrastructure for employment purposes. Modern businesses may find it difficult to obtain and maintain success without having an online presence. To compete in an online market, businesses need access to digital infrastructure and the know-how to be able to leverage digital infrastructure to market themselves and connect with customers. If Kearns can provide both of these things, the community may see increased demand for home businesses. The community could capitalize on this trend, which would expand opportunities for entrepreneurs who do not have the capital for a brick-and-mortar location but can maintain a thriving online business.

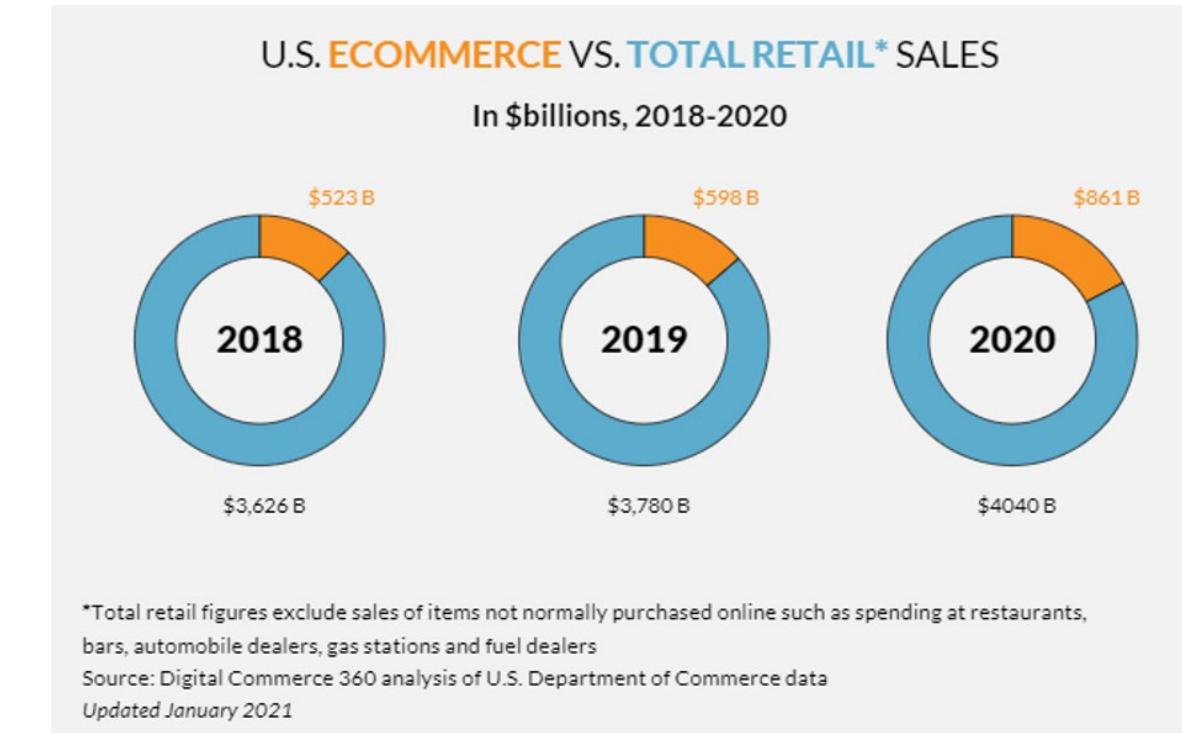
**Figure R46: U.S. E-Commerce and Department Store Sales Over-Time.**

## E-Commerce Sales v. Department Store Sales



Source: Business Insider – Wolf Street, 2017.

**Figure R47: Online Sales as a Percentage of Total U.S. Retail Sales (2018-2020).**



Source: Digital Commerce 360, 2021.

**Digital World, Opportunities and Challenges:** With technology increasingly available, it is becoming more difficult for individuals to unplug. In Kearns, 25.1% of the population spends five or more hours online (excluding email and IM use) every single day (Esri Business Analyst, 2020 – Electronics and Internet Market Potential). Although this is lower than the U.S. average, it still carries an impact for the community. Social media is just one of the many virtual activities that residents spend time on during the day, but increasing social media use has significant implications. Kevin Werbach, the founder of SuperNova Group, and an associate professor of Legal Studies and Business Ethics at the University of Pennsylvania, writes:

“Social media has become really fundamental to the way that billions of people get information about the world and connect with each other, which raises the stakes enormously.” - (Knowledge@Wharton, 2019).

Some organizations have reported that social media is threatening community “third places” (APA Viewpoint, 2018). Instead of gathering in-person, people are connecting with one another online and over social media platforms. Additionally, as many activities that used to be conducted in-person transition to a digital presence (i.e. banking, retail, grocery shopping, medical care), organic informal interactions among community members occur less frequently. There are benefits to living in a digital world, where information is available at the click of a button and people can access goods and services even from remote destinations, but there are also ill effects that must be mitigated. Beloved community amenities and spaces must adapt to serve diverse and changing needs. For example, outdoor plazas may need to offer free wifi and outlets to draw workers on their lunch breaks. Rather than advertising in the newspaper, businesses may need to attract new customers by designing spaces worthy of pictures to be shared and tagged on Instagram.

Communities may also feel increasingly called to promote programs and activities that enhance resident mental health. A study from the University of Pittsburgh Brain Institute found that social media users are 3.3 times more likely than non-users to report feeling anxious or depressed (APA Viewpoint, 2018). At the same time, The Common Sense Media Survey in 2019 reported that 13 percent of surveyed teens claimed they had been cyber-bullied at least one time while using social media (American Psychological Association, 2019). Several strategies have been suggested

for improving community mental health, including these by the [Healthy Utah Community Program \(2021\)](#):

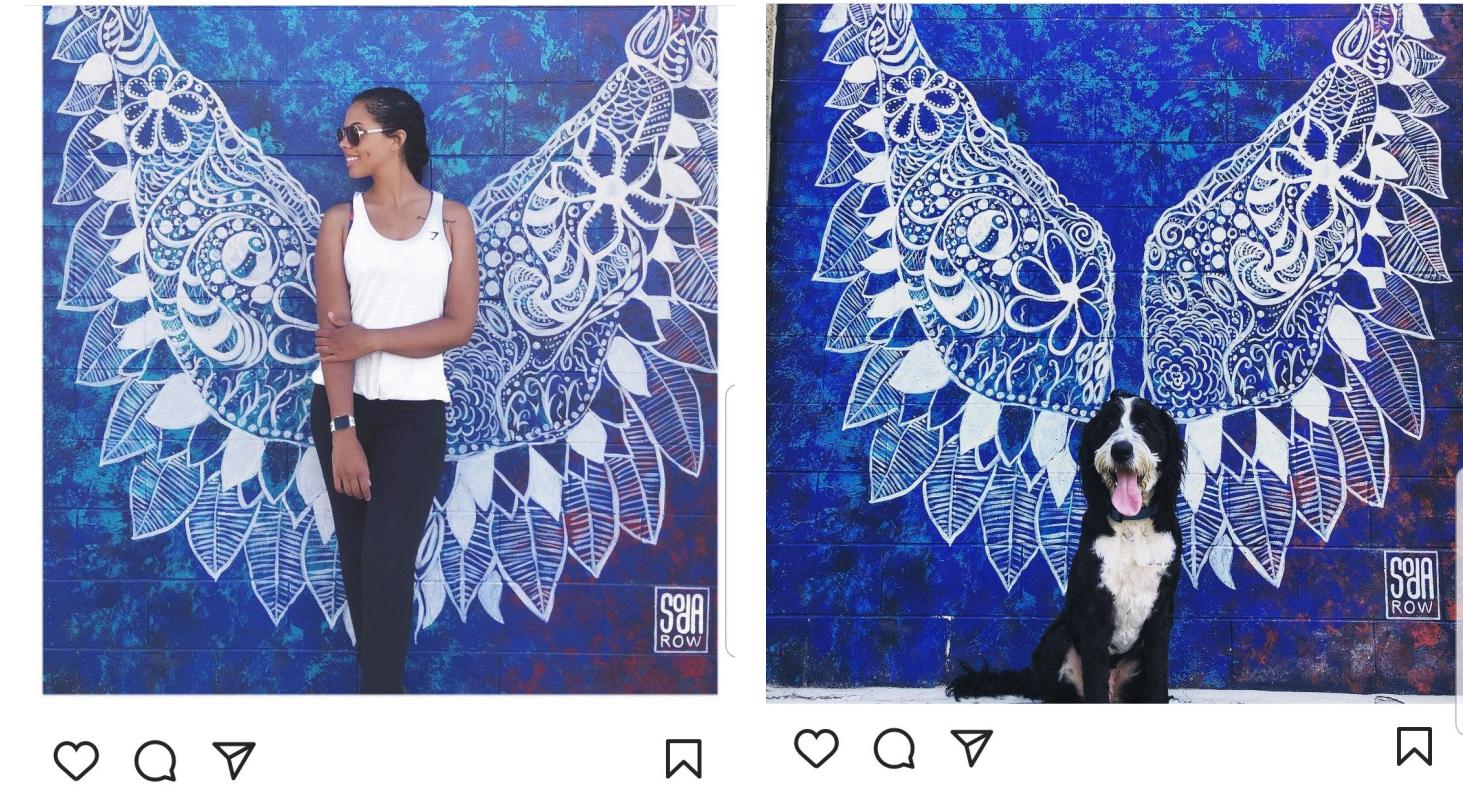
1. Offer ‘Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)’ trainings.
2. Provide at least one evidence-based program or initiative that includes education, awareness, and training to community members around mental health.
3. Promote the use of the SafeUT app in schools and other community centers.
4. Offer medication disposal services, locations, or programs.
5. Provide gun locks available for free for community members.

Two of the strategies in the above list shift into the realm of addiction, accidental overdose, and suicide prevention. These are all prevalent problems within Salt Lake County. Drug poisoning deaths in Utah, including intentional, unintentional, and unknown intent, occurred at a rate of 21.3 per 100,000 population in 2018 (Utah Public Health IBIS, 2021). This was slightly lower than the age-adjusted national rate (*ibid*). Between 2017 and 2019, the County’s age-adjusted rate of suicide per 100,000 population was 22.2 (Utah Public Health IBIS, 2021). This was far above the national rate, and one point higher than the state rate (*ibid*). Several groups in Kearns are actively working to reduce risks of addiction, overdose, and mental illness, especially in area youth. Evidence 2 Success Kearns is a leader in this, with two of its four priorities listed as follows (Evidence2Success Kearns, 2021):

1. “Decrease youth alcohol use and substance abuse, including e-cigarettes.”
2. “Ensure our families and youth are physically and mentally healthy.”

The community can continue to address these concerns by lending resource support to families, getting residents involved in community events and volunteer opportunities, and expanding access to health care through free or reduced-cost clinics, provision of transportation services, and more.

**Figure R48: Residents Pose with Murals in Daybreak, Utah**



Communities have tapped into social media networks to expand branding, capture the attention of younger generations, and even improve community aesthetics. Soda Row in Daybreak, UT features murals with the commercial area’s logos printed in the background. The above images show residents of all types (furry friends included) posing in front of the artwork. This strategy could prove successful for attracting interest in Kearns’ Town Center.

**Source:** Instagram, 2021. Found by searching #sodarow.

**Lasting Impacts of COVID-19:** The COVID-19 Pandemic is teaching us what it means to be resilient. Following the end of the pandemic, there will be no previous ‘normal’ state to return to. COVID-19 has inevitably altered the world in ways that will remain even once the virus disappears (Harvard Kennedy School, 2020; UChicago, 2020; BBC, 2020). Kearns must adapt to and learn to thrive in the conditions left in the wake of the pandemic. **What long-term impacts are expected or already visible?**

**Demand for public space and other amenities close to home (BBC, 2020).** Widespread lockdowns that occurred in the early part of the pandemic emphasized the need for services and amenities close to home. In Utah, demand for local outdoor recreational amenities particularly increased; for example, trail usage in Utah County was 30%-40% higher on average in 2020 compared to 2019 (GNAR Network, 2020). While closures and travel restrictions caused visitation to ski resorts, national parks, and other popular tourist destinations to decrease, residents fled to local outdoor recreation infrastructure. If trends toward remote working continue, communities may find that they must invest in trails, greenways, park, and recreation spaces in order to attract and retain residents.

As residents increasingly seek out recreational opportunities close to home, Kearns will need to invest in its parks, open spaces, and trail networks in order to compete with nearby municipalities. The community may need to look for ways to connect existing parks and open spaces in order to form a larger greenway network and provide more access to area residents.

**Increased telecommuting, shrinking demand for office space, and new home designs to accommodate remote work (BBC, 2020).** In response to the pandemic, as of June of 2020, 42% of the U.S. Labor Force was estimated to be working from home full-time (Wong, 2020). This trend is expected to continue (ibid). While remote work has benefits, such as less emissions from transportation, location independence (job opportunities less limited by geographic location), and lower company overhead costs, there are also challenges. Remote working can exacerbate the digital divide, as described below. In addition, the majority of the population now shifting to remote work (telecommuting) previously worked in offices in urban centers (Wong, 2020). With a move to remote-working, demand for office space may decrease, and the population of workers in urban centers may decrease with it, leading to an inability to support restaurants,

retail, services, and other businesses that previously relied on that population. Finally, telecommuting is changing interior design needs. It is expected that many will seek to retrofit their homes or buy homes that have an office space or other nook conducive to remote work (BBC, 2020).

With telecommuting expected to remain a critical component of the U.S. economy, Kearns should focus on programs and incentives that expand opportunities to work from home – whether that be increased broadband access and reliability, support for home occupations, or integration of essential services and amenities into neighborhoods. The community should also emphasize residential, retail, and food and entertainment uses in its proposed Town Center, reserving fewer office spaces. This comes from the recognition that demand for office space may not return to pre-pandemic conditions and that office space may be more desirable next to industrial and commercial uses in the Warehouse District.

**Exacerbated digital divide as remote learning and working become more prevalent (UChicago, 2020).** Shifting to digital learning and working can have several benefits. However, the shift can also be detrimental for those who do not have access to quick, reliable Internet, or the equipment needed to access the Internet and working / learning platforms (computers, webcams, microphones, etc.). Traditionally, access to broadband Internet and tech equipment has been disproportionately distributed as described in previous sections (“the digital divide”). Urban communities tend to fare better than rural communities, while higher-income neighborhoods receive better access than lower-income neighborhoods (Stelitano, Doan, Woo, Dilberti, Kaufman, & Henry, 2020).

Kearns is an economically diverse community. As discussed in the Digital Infrastructure portion of this Element, there are still households in Kearns without Internet service at home. Fiber Optic Internet is especially limited in the community, although that is changing. As the world moves toward a future that relies heavily on remote learning and telecommuting, the community will need to continue to address inequities in access and leverage programs to expand Internet coverage, availability of technology, and training in using various equipment and software.

**Greater gender inequalities in the workforce (Landivar, Ruppaner, & Scarborough, 2020).** COVID-19 has had the effect of worsening existing inequities, not excluding gender inequities. Women have been burdened by the pandemic in three main ways (Landivar, Ruppaner, & Scarborough, 2020):

- They disproportionately serve as the front-line or essential workers most likely to be exposed to and contract COVID-19.
- Women are more likely to work in industries that have experienced economic distress during the pandemic.
- Due to school and day-care closures, women are taking on the role of caregivers and performing increasing amounts of domestic work.

Research has shown that women are more likely to be unemployed than men during the pandemic, that mothers are more likely than fathers to exit the labor force or be unemployed, and that in heterosexual couples where telecommuting is an option for both parents, mothers have reduced their working hours to a greater extent than fathers (ibid).

Women are being disproportionately burdened by COVID-19 when it comes to labor force participation. The community may need to take extra note of women’s and especially mothers’ needs during this time and formulate programs to serve these members of the population. In Kearns, 55.5% of all households have at least one person under the age of eighteen (18) present, and 1,119 households with children (21.3% of all households with children) are led by a female with no spouse present (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019 – Table S1101).

**Uncertainty and fear influencing consumer behavior (Bauer, Broady, Edelberg, & O’Donnel, 2020).** When the pandemic started, one immediate response from U.S. households was a reduction in spending and an increase in saving. In April of 2020, the personal savings rate for U.S. residents rose to its highest level in history (34 percent) (Bauer, Broady, Edelberg, & O’Donnel, 2020). Savings rates remain elevated, especially for higher-income households (ibid). The increase in savings is attributed both to lower spending and to federal transfer payments (ibid). Many researchers expect that lower spending and greater savings will continue for a few years following the end of the pandemic; this is largely because of households’ uncertainty about economic conditions and fear about whether it is safe to travel, eat out at restaurants, or visit crowded destinations (BBC, 2020).

Kearns relies heavily on sales tax, unable to collect property taxes as a condition of incorporation as a Metro Township. Fortunately, taxable sales in 2020 exceeded taxable sales in 2019 in Kearns for every single month (SLCo Economic Impact Information Portal, 2020). However, the community should be prepared to seek

other sources of revenue if the economic impacts of the pandemic linger in future years. Kearns may also take advantage of residents’ reluctance to travel long distances by instead offering more local events and programs that fill that need for households (while adhering to health and safety recommendations). This could simultaneously bring revenue while forging a stronger social network and community identity.

**Lack of government funding and need for adaptive and creative solutions for providing services (Harvard Kennedy School, 2020).** A decrease in spending, paired with failing businesses and less revenue from user charges (like parking fines) has resulted in financial hardship for local governments (Harvard Kennedy School, 2020). Simultaneously, State revenue streams are decreasing due to limited tourism and the loss of dollars typically generated from regional drivers like airports, sport stadiums, and conventions (ibid). While these things also affect federal government to some degree, state and local governments are more impacted because they are forced to balance their budgets each year and cannot borrow indefinitely. Extreme financial stress on local and state government may lead to lay-offs and a reduced offering of services.

Although Utah as a whole has fared better than most other U.S. States during the pandemic (SLCo Economic Impact Information Portal, 2020), Kearns should still be prepared for financial hardship. Fiscal responsibility should be exercised during this time; and if cutting services becomes necessary due to budget constraints, residents should be consulted to determine which services are essential and which the community can do without. As discussed in the work program, Kearns can improve accountability and resident trust by inviting residents to engage in budgeting and continuing to involve them in other community decision-making processes.

Note that this list is not exhaustive. At the time of this writing, the long-term impacts of the pandemic are still uncertain. Kearns must be continuously alert to the effects that COVID-19 is having on the population and quality of life, and must diligently work to respond to the changing needs and desires of the community. Adaptive responses like the ‘Mask Up Kearns’ events, transformation of annual community events into socially-distant formats, and engagement of business owners through the CARES Act already demonstrate the resilience of the Kearns community.

## What is Environmental Justice?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines environmental justice as,

"the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." (EPA, 2021)

In order for this to occur, communities must be involved in the decision-making process for setting environmental ordinances, launching environmental programs, and siting environmental assets or burdens. Involvement in planning and decision-making processes, as well as diligent analysis and consideration by planners and elected officials, ensures that no one group is gaining all assets or experiencing all burdens. In other words, environmental justice seeks to ensure that benefits (like parks and open spaces) are evenly distributed, while those items that harm health, safety, or environmental quality (like landfills or heavy industry) are not disproportionately impacting one group of people.

Often times, environmental justice questions do not have clear answers. For example, consider Utah's Emissions Tests. The test serves a valuable purpose: keeping Utah's air clean for residents and visitors by ensuring that vehicles are operating efficiently and not spewing more emissions than the vehicle's design intended. Yet, in reality, this program burdens low-income residents more than others. The benefits (cleaner air) are distributed evenly, but the costs of completing the emissions test are likely to be a greater challenge for those without ample disposable income. In addition, low-income households are more likely to drive older vehicles or forego needed repairs in order to pay for food or housing. But if these households fail their annual emissions test, they will have to come up with funds relatively quickly to fix the problem. While the requirements are the same for all residents, the burden on low-income households is greater since they are less likely to have the money available to comply with the requirement. How do we balance that burden with the benefits of keeping emissions low and preserving air quality? It is a question that elected officials will continue to grapple with.

**Climate Change:** This Element considers climate change as the human-induced increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere, leading to a global warming effect and a host of other impacts which result from such warming. In their 2015 guide, *Dire Predictions: Understanding Climate Change*, Pennsylvania State University scientists and professors Michael E. Mann and Lee R. Kum write:

"Basic principles of physics and chemistry dictate that Earth will warm as concentrations of greenhouse gases increase. Though various natural factors can influence Earth's climate, only the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations linked to human activity, principally the burning of fossil fuels, can explain recent patterns of global warming. Other changes in Earth's climate, such as shifting precipitation patterns, worsening drought in many locations, increasingly severe heat waves, and more intense Atlantic hurricanes, are also likely repercussions of human impact (p.16)."

The book seeks to disseminate findings from the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to the general public in a way that is easily understood. Climate change is currently and will continue to impact not just the Intermountain West, but the entire planet. On a global scale, the IPCC predicts that the following effects of climate change are 'very likely' or 'virtually certain' to occur by the end of the 21st Century (Mann & Kum, 2021; p. 21):

- Cold days and nights become warmer and less frequent.
- Hot days and nights become warmer and more frequent.
- Average sea level will rise (and continue to do so for centuries).
- Spring snow cover will decrease in the Earth's Northern Hemisphere.
- The frequency of warm spells and heat waves will increase.
- The frequency of heavy precipitation events will increase.

In 2020, the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute released its *Utah Roadmap: Positive Solutions on Climate and Air Quality*. This report explores climate data relevant to the state to determine how the changing climate is impacting Utahns. Figure R49 reveals a myriad of impacts ranging from temperature, to water availability, to hazards, and health outcomes. These impacts can be either 'mitigated' or 'adapted to'. Examples are provided on the next page. To learn more about climate change mitigation and adaptation, [explore these resources from NASA](#).

During a series of General Plan Steering Committee (GPSC) meetings in winter of 2021, participants identified the following strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change in their community:

- **Reduce emissions from automobiles:** emissions from automobiles contribute carbon dioxide and particulate matter into the atmosphere, worsening warming effects and air quality. While the community cannot prevent the use of automobiles, they can invest in active transportation and encourage more residents to access destinations by walking, biking, or riding transit. This may include installing bike racks in the Town Center, providing shelters near busy bus stops, or adding and repairing sidewalks in residential neighborhoods.
- **Conserve resources at the household level:** members of the GPSC identified several actions which can help reduce energy consumption at the household level. These include connecting residents with resources for energy-saving home retrofits, researching incentive

programs for household-scale renewable energy systems, and educating residents on the benefits of waterwise landscaping. Reducing resource consumption leads to less energy usage (reliance on fossil fuels) and therefore less emission of the greenhouse gases responsible for warming. Likewise, responsible use of limited resources may help households adapt to the rising costs of water, power, and materials.

- **Incorporate sustainable designs into the built environment:** participants in the planning process recognized an opportunity to mitigate and adapt to climate change by intentionally incorporating sustainable designs into the built environment. For example, the community could reach its goal of traffic calming along 5400 S through a median landscaped with a bioswale capable of conserving resources, capturing emissions from traffic, and providing cooling benefits.

Other adaptation and mitigation strategies are included in the work program at the end of this Element.

**Figure R49: How is Climate Change Impacting Utah?**

<p><b>Health Impacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts disproportionately affect children, the elderly, and those with chronic health conditions.</li> <li>• Higher levels of dust, allergens, and other pollutants worsen respiratory diseases like asthma.</li> <li>• Higher temperatures increase the range of disease-carrying insects and raise the rates of heat stroke and cardiovascular, respiratory, and kidney diseases.</li> <li>• Water-borne infections can rise as temperatures rise.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Declining Snowpack</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snowpack in some places decreased nearly 80% between 1955 and 2013.</li> <li>• Decreasing snowpack levels, combined with warmer spring weather, compromises Utah's water supply, 80% of which come from melting snowpack.</li> <li>• Warmer winters cause shorter ski seasons, greater utilization of snow-making equipment at Utah resorts, and increased avalanche risk.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Warmer, Drier Conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forests are more susceptible to disease and pests, such as bark beetles, as drought reduces the ability of trees to defend themselves.</li> <li>• Wildfires are more frequent, more intense and larger, affecting land, property, and human health.</li> <li>• Heat stroke and dehydration are amplified in urban settings where paved surfaces store and reflect heat.</li> <li>• Algae blooms are common.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Extreme Weather Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flash floods are increasing, up six-fold over the past 20 years.</li> <li>• Smoke from wildfires worsens air quality throughout the state.</li> <li>• Winter storms are becoming less frequent, but more intense.</li> <li>• Extreme events can damage public infrastructure, interrupt business, and affect agricultural production.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Figure derived from The Utah Roadmap (Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2020), with formatting changed to match this General Plan.

## Recognizing Disproportionate Impacts

It is important to understand that the changes addressed in the previous sections will impact different people in different ways. While some industries may prosper as a result of growing online sales, other industries may become obsolete. Individuals may be harmed or benefited at various scales based on their age, race, income, gender or other socioeconomic conditions. Table R50 shows how groups of residents in Kearns may be disproportionately impacted by sudden events or long-term changes. The community can take steps to support these groups before, during, and after major stressors to limit disproportionate burdens.

### Strategies for Meeting the Needs of Diverse Groups:

- Work with community partners to assess and address needs:** recognizing that community partners have already built relationships with and programs to serve diverse populations, Kearns can continue to support its residents by supporting these organizations and inviting partners into decision-making processes.
- Engage underrepresented groups in planning and decision-making processes:** the work program of this Element identifies several strategies for engaging with populations that do not typically attend planning events or government meetings. Empowering these residents to share their voice and plan for their future will help ensure that decisions do not unfairly burden one group over another.
- Learn from and share successes with other communities:** Kearns can gain insight from successful resilience and infrastructure initiatives in other communities. Kearns should also step into its role as a leader in resilience and infrastructure planning, sharing 'lessons learned' and innovative ideas with local and regional partners who serve a broader community.

**Table R50: Examples of Disproportionate Impacts Among Residents in Kearns**

Category	Percentage of Residents / Households	Example of Disproportionate Impacts
<b>Seniors (65+)</b>	6.4%	In an emergency, seniors in the community may be difficult to reach because they are less likely to regularly use smart phones or the Internet. This group may miss announcements about an earthquake, fire, or other emergency event. Underlying conditions, such as mobility impairments or social isolation may also make it difficult for this group to evacuate or get help in an emergency.
<b>Children (&lt;18)</b>	34.1%	Beyond just being reliant on others for care, the needs of children differ from those of adults, which can place children at greater risk during emergencies or stressful situations. For example, vaccinations for the COVID-19 virus are now available to all adults in the United States. But development of a vaccine for children is ongoing. Special care must be taken to protect children's developing bodies and immune systems, which are unique from those of adults. <a href="#">See also this infographic from the CDC.</a>
<b>Persons Identifying as a Minority Race</b>	34.1%	Historically, federal, state, and local regulations created huge barriers to homeownership for persons of color ( <a href="#">learn more here</a> ). Individuals identifying as a minority race still experience lower rates of homeownership than White residents (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019). Individuals who rent instead of own their home are more likely to experience housing cost burden. While mortgages are primarily fixed-rate, rent can rise year after year, forcing individuals and families out of their homes or even neighborhoods. This displacement can dissolve social ties, disrupt a child's school year, or force adults to quit their jobs in search of employment in a new place more affordable to live.
<b>Persons with a Disability</b>	10.3%	Persons with a disability in Kearns may have a range of needs depending on the nature of the disability. For example, consider an individual with a visual impairment. How would such an individual navigate the community? Does Kearns have infrastructure in place that would allow that person to cross a busy intersection independently? Is signage available in brail at community centers or bus stops? And do emergency personnel have the capacity to communicate important messages or notifications to these individuals?
<b>Households with Zero Cars</b>	1.0%	In Kearns, few destinations are easily accessible without access to an automobile. Households without cars may be at-risk in many different kinds of emergencies. In the event an evacuation is needed, these households may not have the means to leave. Without a car, residents may have difficulty accessing needed services, like health care.
<b>Population Below Poverty Level</b>	10.3%	COVID-19 may have disproportionately impacted Kearns' residents living in poverty, as these individuals are less likely to be able to afford to stockpile food, purchase protective gear, or miss a day of work. This reality puts the individuals at greater risk of exposure.
<b>Households considered Limited English Speaking</b>	5.5%	It may be more difficult for limited-English-speaking households to prepare for natural disasters because of the language barrier. If guides are not created in multiple languages or shared through personnel that can translate messages, these households may miss out on important information.
<b>Population Lacking Health Insurance*</b>	17.4%	Residents lacking health insurance may not be able to afford to regularly see a doctor or dentist. As a result, they may miss health issues that can be caught early and treated with regular screening. If a condition develops, such an individual may not see a medical professional until symptoms are unmanageable (at which point treatment may be less successful and more costly).

**Source:** Table created by MSD Long Range Planning (2021), using data from ACS 5-Year Estimates (2019) and \*SLCo Health Department (2020).

## Kearns Leads the Way

Whether the region has fully recognized it or not, Kearns is a leader among Utah communities. We are one of the first communities in Utah to propose a plan that so deeply explores social, digital, and brick-and-mortar infrastructure, equity issues, and the relationship of each of these to community resiliency. We further lead by not only examining these items in the context of hazard mitigation, but also in light of incremental change over time. However, general planning is not the only arena in which Kearns is at the forefront of leadership and innovation.

### Field of Dreams EcoCommunity

The Field of Dreams, located in the southeast quadrant of Kearns, is a collaborative project between Habitat for Humanity and architect Atelier Jörg Rügemer. The project features affordable housing in a small community setting. However, these are not your typical affordable units. The Field of Dreams features passive design, which uses natural earth systems to improve energy-efficiency of the units. The cost savings is passed on to residents, who pay less in monthly utility bills.

### James and Sherry Hayes Demonstration Garden

The Kearns Improvement District (KID) maintains this demonstration garden at 5820 W and 6200 S in Kearns. The garden provides examples of water-efficient plants and landscaping that residents can use within their own yards. In the past, KID has used this venue for family-friendly education and outreach events related to water management.

**Figure R51: Demonstration Garden**



**Source:** Google Maps Street View, 2018.

## What Does It Take to be a Resilient Community?

At the very beginning of this Element, we defined resilience as the ability of complex systems to change, adapt, and transform in positive ways within a reasonable time frame, following hardships and disasters (adapted from Davoudi, 2012). *But what does it take for a community to become resilient?* [Resilience.org](https://resilience.org), a platform dedicated to supporting resilient communities across the world, identifies these six pillars of a resilient community:

- 1. People:** the community plans, makes decisions, and builds resilience with its residents, rather than for them.
- 2. Systems Thinking:** the community thinks holistically about the challenges it faces, recognizing that the complexity of 'wicked problems' means that there are no easy solutions.
- 3. Adaptability:** the community is willing to grow and adapt to change, and recognizes that adaptation is an on-going process in response to new challenges.
- 4. Transformability:** the community recognizes that in some instances, a challenge may require fundamental, transformative changes to community systems.
- 5. Sustainability:** solutions put forth by the community in response to challenges, disasters, or hardships are sustainable; the community has the resources to uphold actions now and into the future. Sustainability also implies that solutions are considered for their regional impacts and effects on ecosystem, social, and economic structures.
- 6. Courage:** the community has the courage to take on complex challenges and adapt in response to a changing world. The community envisions the future it wants and works toward it (Resilience, 2021).

In this Element, we show how Kearns demonstrates community resiliency. In engaging residents in planning and decision-making, Kearns shows its willingness to work with rather than for residents in building a resilient future. We discussed how the community adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic through "Mask Up Kearns" events, and even used this platform to address social causes like voter registration. We also explored fiscal responsibility and encouraged the community to commit to governance that will be sustainable well into the future. Finally, we recognized that Kearns exemplifies courage in the face of complexity. Not only has the community tackled issues related to resilience and infrastructure throughout this Element, but Kearns has also proposed a comprehensive work program to address these challenges. Kearns continues to show resilience in the face of adversity.

## Community Work Program

The next pages detail the resilience and infrastructure work program for Kearns. Tables are laid out in a series of goals, objectives, and actions to help the community achieve its future vision. In total, over 40 actions are proposed through this work program. Every action is accompanied by technical information about who the Kearns Council could work with to advance the action, the proposed timeline for completion, the estimated cost, and the metric for success. Resources provided link to useful case studies, funding sources, or other guidelines for helping Kearns reach its goals. Please note that listed potential partners represent those groups that the community may consider working with in implementation, but does not commit groups to involvement nor prevent other groups or organizations from getting involved.

The resilience and infrastructure work program was developed in direct response to the challenges and opportunities identified in this Element. Content was based on robust data collection as well as community outreach throughout the General Plan process. The future success of these initiatives depends on Kearns' continuing commitment to collaboration, innovation, and leadership.

## Goals and Objectives:

### Goal 1: Maintain and enhance Kearns' social infrastructure.

- Foster social connections and partnerships.
- Practice good governance.
- Address existing social, economic, and health inequities.
- Improve Kearns' image.

### Goal 2: Maintain and enhance Kearns' digital infrastructure.

- Improve access to and competency navigating technology and the Internet.
- Streamline communications.

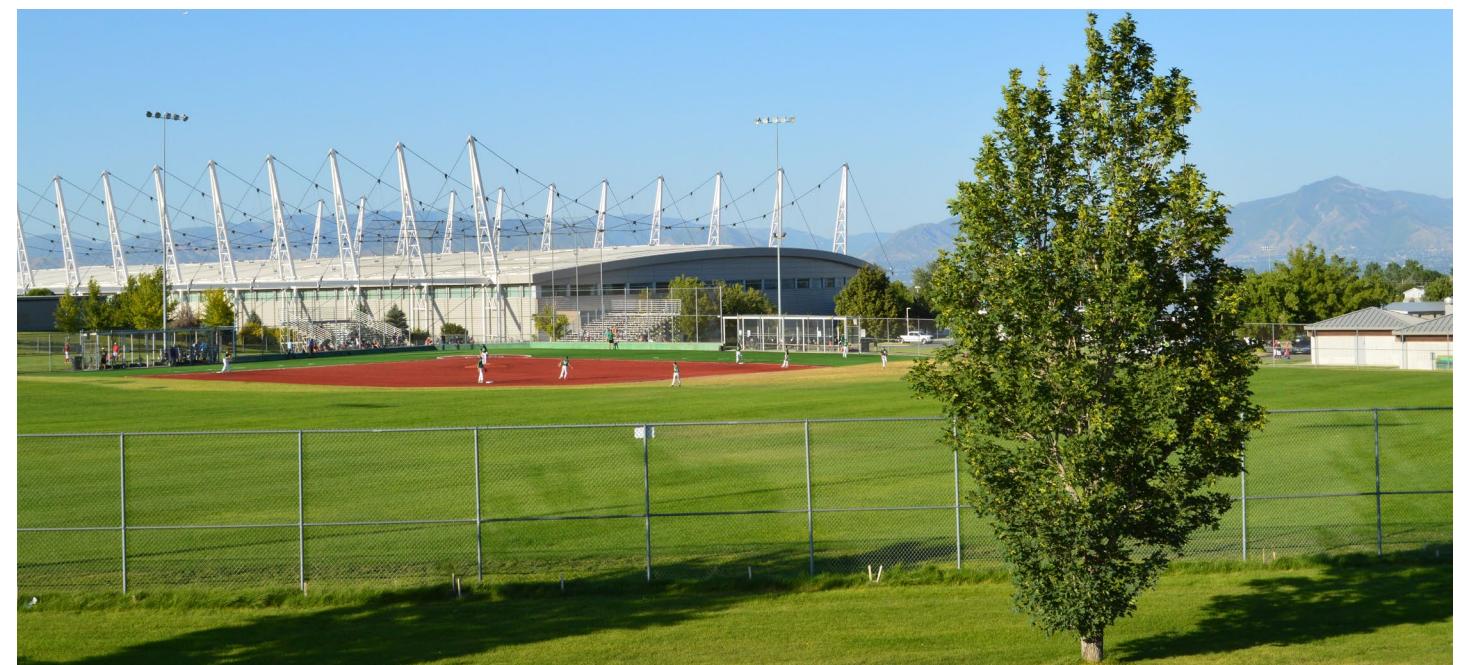
### Goal 3: Maintain and enhance Kearns' brick and mortar infrastructure.

- Improve infrastructure maintenance.
- Collect valuable data on the state of infrastructure systems.
- Encourage new projects and infrastructure updates that are visually attractive and multi-functional.

### Goal 4: Promote community resiliency.

- Mitigate potential harmful changes and stressors.
- Adapt to potential changes and stressors.
- Encourage innovation and self-sufficiency.

**Figure R52: Kearns' Youth Play Baseball at Oquirrh Park on a Sunny, Summer Day.**



**Source:** Kayla Mauldin, 2020.

Goal: Maintain and enhance Kearns' social infrastructure.													
Objective 1: Foster social connections and partnerships.													
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources	
Consider the creation of a Local Arts Agency (LAA) to promote arts and culture in Kearns.	Coordination and Collaboration	X	X				MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Arts and Culture Working Group; Utah Division of Arts & Museums; Kearns CC	Staff Time; initial seed money if LAA is established	General Fund; Grants from Utah Division of Arts and Museums; Private donor funds	Staff and Working Group consider feasibility and desirability of establishing an LAA.	<a href="#">Utah Division of Arts and Museums Local Arts Agencies</a>	
Host an annual symposium of community organization leaders in Kearns to identify challenges, share planned projects and research findings, create potential partnerships, and advance partner education and leadership.	Coordination and Collaboration	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Kearns CC; Local Community Organizations	Staff Time; possible costs for food / printing / space rental	General Fund	At least one symposium is held annually for Kearns' community organizations.	<a href="#">Example: Seattle Symposium on International Trade Issues</a>	
Work with the Kearns Recreation Center to complete needed maintenance, expand activity offerings, and make other improvements as requested by the community. Support the Rec Center especially in offering free and low-cost recreational programs.	Coordination and Collaboration; Technical Support; Capital Improvements and Infrastructure		X	X			MSD PDS; Kearns MTC; Kearns Recreation Center	Oquirrh Recreation and Parks District; SLCo Parks and Rec; Kearns CC	\$500,000+	Crowdfunding; Intermountain Community Care Foundation Grants; Rite Aid Foundation KidCents Regional Grants	Needs of Kearns Recreation Center and desires of community are identified. Strategy created for addressing.	<a href="#">NRPA Crowdfunding Toolkit</a>	
Work with SLCo Parks and Recreation and the Oquirrh Recreation and Parks District to organize food truck and/or outdoor market events in Kearns Oquirrh Park. Invite the SLCo Health Department as a partner to help education residents on nutrition, exercise, and other relevant health topics.	Coordination and Collaboration; Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Oquirrh Recreation and Parks District	Kearns MTC; Kearns CC; KOPFC Board; Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation	Staff Time; possible costs related to logistics and advertisement of event	General Fund; Partner contributions	At least one event held with partners annually, including health and nutrition education component.	<a href="#">The Food Truck League, Utah</a>	
Objective 2: Practice good governance.													
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources	
Encourage staff and elected officials to seek diverse representation that reflects Kearns demographics on commissions, councils, and steering committees.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Kearns PC; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Increasing participation from underrepresented communities in civic processes and leadership positions.	Planning with Diverse Communities (2019) - APA Utah: Garcia, Garfinkel- Castro, & Pfeiffer	
Continue to progress the strategies outlined in the Moderate Income Housing Plan (2019).	Technical Support; Research, Studies, and Reports	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS	Kearns PC; Kearns MTC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff continues to progress MIH Plan and completes annual reports to state.	<a href="#">Link to Moderate Income Housing Plan (2019).</a>	
Identify and work with neighborhood liaisons to help engage the public in planning and civic processes.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Residents	Kearns PC; Kearns MTC; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff finds and partners with neighborhood leaders / liaisons.	<a href="#">Communities United Promotoras Model</a>	
Support the Kearns Council in the preparation and sharing of its annual budget.	Technical Support	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS	Kearns MTC; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff provides technical assistance in preparing and educating residents on the annual budget.	<a href="#">The Basics of Equity in Budgeting</a>	
Strategize and implement methods for encouraging Kearns' youth to participate in planning and decision-making.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS	Kearns PC; Kearns MTC; Granite School District; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff explores opportunities for youth engagement and begins to welcome youth to planning events.	<a href="#">Washington APA Youth in Planning</a>	

Objective 3: Address existing social, economic, and health inequities.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Continue to organize and promote health and safety events, such as 'Mask Up Kearns', even after the COVID-19 pandemic has ended.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	Kearns MTC	Kearns CC; UPD; SLCo Health Department; Evidence2Success	Cost varies depending on event	General Fund; Intermountain Community Care Foundation Grants	At least one community health event held per year.	<a href="#">News article on 'Mask Up Kearns'</a>
Regularly update the social equity data found in this Element; report out on any changes in the data and evaluate the impact various interventions have on equity indicator data.	Research, Studies, and Reports; Communications and Website Maintenance	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS	SLCo Economic Development; Kearns MTC	Staff Time	General Fund	Social equity data updated once annually and shared on Kearns' websites.	<a href="#">Kearns Long Range Planning Hub Site</a>
Research and present opportunities for reducing local evictions and empowering residents to safely remain in their homes.	Research, Studies, and Reports		X	X			MSD PDS	Kearns PC; Kearns MTC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff researches local eviction rates and processes and considers programs for reducing eviction.	<a href="#">The Eviction Lab</a>
Work with Granite School District and SLCo Economic Development to introduce students to future career paths, including government and city planning, as part of a strategy to increase educational attainment and commitment to school.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Granite School District; SLCo Economic Development; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff and Council reach out to Granite School District about opportunities to engage youth.	<a href="#">APA Guide: Teaching Young People About Planning</a>
Meet with the representative for homeless education at Granite School District to discuss ways that the community can support its homeless youth and students.	Coordination and Collaboration		X	X			MSD PDS	Kearns MTC; Kearns CC; Granite School District	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff discusses with Granite School District Rep for Homeless Education.	<a href="#">Extent of Homelessness Among American Students</a>
Objective 4: Improve Kearns' image.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Share lessons learned in Kearns with other MSD communities and at state and local planning conferences; promote Kearns as a leader in committing to addressing equity.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Professional planning organizations; MSD member communities	Staff Time; possible registration and transportation costs	General Fund	Staff presents on findings at least every other year; seeks opportunities to showcase Kearns to other communities, organizations, and partners.	
Work with MSD Communications and SLCo Economic Development to brainstorm ideas for promoting a brand in Kearns, including generating a hashtag for the community and encouraging residents to use it by posting signs at valued community locations.	Coordination and Collaboration; Communications and Website Maintenance	X	X	X			MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	MSD Communications; SLCo Economic Development; Residents; Kearns CC	Staff Time; costs for signposts estimated up to \$500 per sign	General Fund; U.S. EDA Grants	Staff discusses with SLCo Economic Development and the MT Council.	<a href="#">Keep Austin Weird</a>

Goal: Maintain and enhance Kearns' digital infrastructure.												
Objective 1: Improve access to and competency navigating technology and the Internet.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Identify opportunities to install public Wi-Fi in select locations around Kearns, particularly community centers and 'third places'.	Research, Studies, and Reports; Capital Improvements and Infrastructure	X	X				MSD PDS; SLCo Economic Development	Kearns MTC; SLCo Parks and Rec; Kearns Library	Estimating up to \$1,500 per location, with possible maintenance costs.	Community Connect Grant	By the end of 2022, be in the process of establishing free wi-fi in at least 2 public locations in Kearns.	<a href="#">ABCs of Free Public Wi-Fi: Los Angeles</a>
Collaborate with the Salt Lake County Library's Digital Equity working group to promote strategies for reducing the digital divide.	Coordination and Collaboration	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; SLCo Library	Kearns MTC; Kearns CC; Granite School District	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff regularly communicates with the Library's Digital Equity group and contributes to initiatives that benefit member communities.	<a href="#">SLCo Library Digital Equity Group; The Digital Divide</a>
Objective 2: Streamline communications.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Develop a 'New Resident Packet' to distribute electronically to new community members, guiding them to important websites, resources, and policies.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy; Communications and Website Maintenance		X	X			MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	MSD Communications; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Guide developed and uploaded to the Metro Township Website.	<a href="#">Princeton, IL New Resident Packet</a>
Regularly update residents on upcoming infrastructure projects by posting on the Kearns Metro Township Website and by including project summaries in the MSD's monthly newsletters.	Communications and Website Maintenance	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC; SLCo Engineering	MSD Communications; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff writes brief summaries of projects and submits to Communications for distribution.	<a href="#">MSD Monthly Newsletter</a>
Organize Kearns' community events into a single calendar on the Metro Township Website to increase resident awareness of community happenings.	Communications and Website Maintenance	X	X	X	X	X	MSD Communications	Local organizations, residents, and civic groups, including Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff works with various entities to share events on Metro Township Website.	<a href="#">University of Utah Campus Events Page</a>

Goal: Maintain and enhance Kearns' brick and mortar infrastructure.												
Objective 1: Improve infrastructure maintenance.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Connect residents to resources for home repair and maintenance, including energy-saving retrofits.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy; Grants and Funding	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	SLCo Housing and Community Development; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff updates websites and regularly shares information on home repair and retrofits.	<a href="#">Energy Star Program</a>
Work with MSD staff and Kearns government to assess the short-term and long-term costs of infrastructure projects. Practice fiscal responsibility by 'doing the math' before taking on long-term maintenance liabilities. Regularly engage with and include residents in the budget-making process, to understand community needs, priorities, and trade-offs.	Technical Support; Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	SLCo Engineering; Residents	Staff Time	General Fund; CDBG Funds	Staff regularly considers systems in need of maintenance and creates plans for addressing. Maintenance is prioritized over new construction.	<a href="#">Strong Towns Explanation of the 'Growth' Ponzi Scheme</a>
Hold monthly meetings with staff members working in Kearns to coordinate projects, share challenges and innovations, and support efficient design and funding.	Coordination and Collaboration		X	X	X	X	MSD PDS	SLCo Engineering; SLCo Economic Development	Staff Time; possible costs for food / printing / space rental	General Fund	MSD Staff puts on at least 5 community events per year.	
Educate residents on the risk of lead paint, lead plumbing, and radon in homes, and how to monitor and mitigate.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy		X	X	X	X	MSD Communications	SLCo Housing and Community Development; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff updates websites and regularly shares information on lead and radon exposure risk and mitigation strategies.	<a href="#">SLCo Lead Safe Housing</a>
Meet with UTA to discuss the improvement of intra-community transit in Kearns, so that residents can access not only jobs and hospitals, but also community amenities and the homes of loved ones.	Coordination and Collaboration		X	X			MSD PDS; UTA	SLCo Engineering; Kearns Transportation Working Group	Staff Time; various costs depending on transit improvement strategy.	General Fund; WFRC TLC Program	Staff meets with UTA to discuss community desires for intra-community transit.	<a href="#">Making the case for intra-city (vs. inter-city) transit planning</a>

Objective 2: Collect valuable data on the state of infrastructure systems.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Work with various departments to create an inventory of Kearns' major infrastructure systems, their age, and condition; start planning for maintenance costs based on this data.	Coordination and Collaboration; Research, Studies, and Reports		X	X			MSD PDS; SLCo Engineering	Kearns Improvement District; Utility Providers	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff collaborates on a shared inventory of Kearns' infrastructure systems; makes data available to MTC and other partners as needed.	<a href="#">Edmonton, CA Infrastructure Inventory (see Appendix)</a>
Work with the SLCo Health Department and local health providers to understand why health providers have not located in Kearns and to brainstorm creative solutions for meeting resident health needs locally.	Coordination and Collaboration; Research, Studies, and Reports		X	X			MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	SLCo Health Department; SLCo Economic Development; Local health care providers; EDC	Staff Time	General Fund; encourage providers to use State Primary Care Grants Program	Staff meets with partners to discuss causes of health inequities and methods for addressing.	<a href="#">CDC: Promoting Health Equity</a>
Objective 3: Encourage new projects and infrastructure updates that are visually attractive and multi-functional.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Seek opportunities to reduce stormwater runoff on public projects by incorporating bioswales, rain gardens, and other attractive runoff-reducing green infrastructure projects. This includes the possibility of designing a bioswale median on 5400 S where it passes the proposed Town Center.	Capital Improvements and Infrastructure	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	SLCo Engineering; SLCo Parks and Rec; UDOT	Varies based on project	DEQ Municipal Stormwater Loans;	Staff comprehensively examines design options, including those for multi-functional or green infrastructure design, when updating or expanding infrastructure and facilities.	<a href="#">NACTO Green Infrastructure in Street Design</a>
Meet with Savage Services and UTA to discuss future plans for the railroad through Kearns and secure the community a seat at the decision-making table.	Coordination and Collaboration		X	X			MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Savage Services; UTA	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff meets with UTA and Savage Services.	<a href="#">Rails to Trails Conservancy</a>

Goal: Promote community resiliency.												
Objective 1: Mitigate potential harmful changes and stressors.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Continue to promote planning and development that encourages active transportation and reduces vehicle-related emissions.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy; Policies and Ordinances	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Kearns PC; UTA; UDOT; SLCo Engineering; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff regularly seeks opportunities to improve active transportation infrastructure and feasibility in Kearns.	<a href="#">Active Transportation, Climate Change, and Health</a>
Investigate and promote programs that incentivize private property owners to invest in household-scale renewable energy.	Research, Studies, and Reports; Grants and Funding			X	X		MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Utility Providers; Residents	Staff Time; with various costs based on incentive program selected	General Fund; Utah Governor's Office of Energy Development - Tax Credits	Study of incentive programs completed and a strategy for moving forward developed.	<a href="#">Farming for a Better Climate: Guide to Small Scale Renewables</a>
Work with researchers at the University of Utah to brainstorm a program for encouraging Kearns' residents to plant and maintain pollinator-friendly landscaping.	Coordination and Collaboration		X	X			MSD PDS	University of Utah; Kearns MTC; KOPFC; KID; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund; Academic Courses	Staff meets with U of U faculty to explore opportunities for partnership.	<a href="#">Out with the Weeds, in with the Pollinators</a>
Objective 2: Adapt to potential changes and stressors.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Support Kearns in organizing and managing CERT team; keep a list of CERT individuals and teams in the MSD and Kearns Metro Township offices.	Technical Support	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	UFA; SLCo Emergency Management	Staff Time	General Fund	MSD staff works with UFA and MTC to regularly update the list of CERT individuals and corresponding teams.	<a href="#">UFA CERT</a>
Work with SLCo Economic Development on a program to increase resident resiliency by supporting options to telecommute or start home-based businesses, including educating business owners on how to advertise and sell products online.	Coordination and Collaboration; Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X			MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Kearns PC; SLCo Economic Development	Staff Time and possible publication / training costs	General Fund	MSD PDS and SLCo Economic Development study and report out on programs to encourage telecommuting and home occupations.	
Research the impacts of ride sharing, autonomous vehicles, and e-commerce on needs for parking, loading, unloading, and other traffic infrastructure; use this research to guide the design of the future Town Center and other commercial hubs in Kearns.	Research, Studies, and Reports; Capital Improvements and Infrastructure	X	X				MSD PDS	SLCo Economic Development; SLCo Engineering	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff completes study and reports out on findings.	
Encourage the community to participate in the Utah 'Clear the Air Challenge'.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC; Kearns CC	Travelwise	Staff Time	General Fund	Community leaders and residents participate in the challenge.	<a href="#">Clear the Air Challenge</a>
Identify locations that will serve as 'cooling centers' in the event of a heat wave; ensure residents know where they can go if they need to escape the heat.	Research, Studies, and Reports; Capital Improvements and Infrastructure	X	X				Kearns MTC	MSD PDS; UFA; UPD; Kearns CC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff and MTC identify possible cooling center locations and include in Emergency / Hazard Management Plans.	

Objective 3: Encourage innovation and self-sufficiency.												
Actions	Product Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Metrics	Resources
Investigate and consider pursuing a program for community tool- and equipment-sharing (i.e. ladders, basic household tools, lawn equipment).	Research, Studies, and Reports		X	X	X		MSD PDS: Kearns MTC	Kearns CC; Kearns Library; Residents	One time cost of \$15,000 - \$30,000, with late fees covering future maintenance costs.	CDBG funds	Staff studies best practices for tool-sharing/lending programs and works with the MTC to establish such a program in Kearns.	<a href="#">Tool Lending Libraries</a>
Hold monthly events at the MSD, with collaboration from the Metro Townships, Brighton, and ACCT to raise awareness, educate, and engage residents in various planning issues and topics.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy	X	X	X	X	X	MSD PDS	Kearns MTC; Local speakers and residents	Staff Time; with possible costs for food / printing / space rental	General Fund	Staff organizes monthly events to engage community residents and stakeholders.	
Prepare (or find existing) and distribute informational guides that assist Kearns' residents in making household emergency response plans and facilitating conversations with loved ones.	Education, Engagement, and Advocacy; Communications and Website Maintenance		X	X			MSD Communications	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC; UFA; UPD; Kearns CC	Staff Time and possible printing costs	General Fund	Guide created (or selected from existing) and distributed.	<a href="#">Ready.gov Household Emergency Plans</a>
Regularly update and share maps of Kearns' critical facilities.	Communications and Website Maintenance	X	X	X	X	X	MSD Communications	MSD PDS; Kearns MTC	Staff Time	General Fund	Staff regularly updates the map of Critical Facilities.	
Work with SLCo Economic Development to attract green businesses to Kearns.	Coordination and Collaboration			X	X		MSD PDS; SLCo Economic Development	Kearns MTC	Staff Time; possible costs for incentive programs	General Fund; Utah DEQ - Clean Utah and Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs	Staff holds meetings with SLCo Economic Development to discuss programs for attracting green businesses to Kearns.	<a href="#">What is Green Industry?</a>

# APPENDIX

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## List of Featured URLs

\*Please note that these links were current as of 4/23/2021. Some online content may have been relocated since then.

- **FEMA Community Lifelines Toolkit:** <https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/CommunityLifelinesToolkit2.0v2.pdf>
- **Wicked Problems:** [https://www.wickedproblems.com/l\\_wicked\\_problems.php](https://www.wickedproblems.com/l_wicked_problems.php)
- Ray Oldenburg (Third Places): <https://www.pps.org/article/roldenburg>
- **U.S. Department of Education:** <https://www2.ed.gov/about/initiatives/ed/supporting-homeless-students/index.html#:~:text=The%20State%20of%20Homeless%20Students,the%202013%2D14%20school%20year>
- **Granite School District Education Equity:** <https://www.graniteschools.org/edequity/homeless/>
- **Law of Requisite Variety:** <http://requisitevariety.co.uk/what-is-requisite-variety/>
- **Portland, OR Displacement Case Study:** <https://www.shareable.net/bringing-equity-to-the-forefront-of-urban-planning/>
- **Penn State Guide on Digital Divide:** <https://psu.pb.unizin.org/ist110/chapter/9-3-the-digital-divide/>
- **SLC Digital Equity Policy:** <http://slcdocs.com/council/agendas/Administrative%20Transmittal/2019/SLCDigitalEquityPolicy.pdf>
- **Code RED Emigration Canyon:** <http://www.emigrationcanyon.org/code-red/>
- **Texas Cascading Events:** <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/feb/17/texas-power-blackout-weather-cold>

# APPENDIX

Map of Kearns' Street Funding Classifications

