

Unincorporated Community of Sandy Hills, 2021 Technical Assessment

Prepared by MSD Long Range Planning



G R E A T E R S A L T L A K E
**Municipal Services
District**

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Unincorporated Community of Sandy Hills

Executive Summary

The 2021 Sandy Hills Technical Assessment synthesizes existing conditions and trends related to population demographics, economic conditions, housing characteristics, land use, zoning, and services. The findings of this assessment will be used to guide future planning and decision-making, including the creation of the *2021-2022 Sandy Hills General Plan*. Data will be used to identify opportunities and threats to the Sandy Hills community and plan accordingly to ensure that residents needs are being met in the long-term.

Population, Housing, and Employment

In 2020, Sandy Hills housed 2,118 people and 715 households in 0.35 square miles. The unincorporated community included 725 housing units in total, only 10 of which were vacant. The gross density of Sandy Hills was approximately 6,051 people per square mile, or 3.24 dwelling units per acre. The population of Sandy Hills is not expected to increase significantly in coming years.

Sandy Hills' residents have aged in recent decades. In 2020, the median age was 37.4, almost 5 years older than the median age for Salt Lake County. Despite the ageing population, Sandy Hills is still home to a number of families. In total, there were an estimated 551 children residing in the community in 2020, and household size has held steady at just under 3 people.

Compared to Salt Lake County, Sandy Hills boasts a higher educational attainment and higher median household income. Over 70% of Sandy Hills' workforce is employed in white collar industries.

Homeownership is high among Sandy Hills residents, and has consistently hovered around 80%. Despite the community's high educational attainment and income, many residents are still spending more than 30% of their income on housing (cost-burdened). In 2020, approximately 1 in 5 owner households was cost-burdened, while 40% of renter households were cost-burdened.

Land Use and Zoning

Sandy Hills' current land use is dominated by single-family residential development (a total of 189 acres). Some land is currently used for multi-family and commercial purposes, but these uses are extremely limited. There are numerous recreational opportunities surrounding Sandy Hills, including Flat Iron Mesa Park, Pebblebrook Golf Course, Dimple Dell Regional Park, and the Cottonwood Canyons. Likewise, commercial developments and shopping centers are located just outside the community. The land uses have largely been spurred by existing zoning, which is primarily Agricultural or Single Family Residential for Sandy Hills. Only 1.4 acres are zoned for Multi-Family Residential uses. The A-1 and R-1-6 zones in Sandy Hills promote single family residential development on relatively large lots. Duplexes are allowed in the A-1 zone, but strict conditions apply.

Transportation

No fixed-route transit service currently exists in Sandy Hills. Residents must drive to reach most major places of employment. In 2018, 'Driving Alone' was the most popular means of transportation for Sandy Hills residents commuting to work. The majority of these workers were employed in Salt Lake County, and only 10% of commutes were longer than 34 minutes on average. Although driving a personal vehicle is the most popular option, Sandy Hills workers were also likely to carpool or work from home (each over 10% of the employed population).

Sandy Hills has approximately 10 miles of Class B and C roads which help generate funding from the state. 2016 traffic counts in the area were high, with greatest traffic volume experienced along 1300 E and 8600 S. With an annual average daily traffic amount of 44,000 vehicles per day, 1300 E can act as a significant divide between the east and west portions of the Sandy Hills community.

Services and Governance

Several service providers are active in Sandy Hills, but the majority of services come from Salt Lake County and the Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District (MSD). These services are paid for primarily by Class B and C Road Funds and county-collected sales taxes. Using a per-person rate based on all sales tax collected by Salt Lake County in 2020, we estimated that Sandy Hills residents generated approximately \$766,422 in sales taxes in that year. The true amount may be more or less depending on the individual spending patterns of Sandy Hills households in 2020.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Using the Document

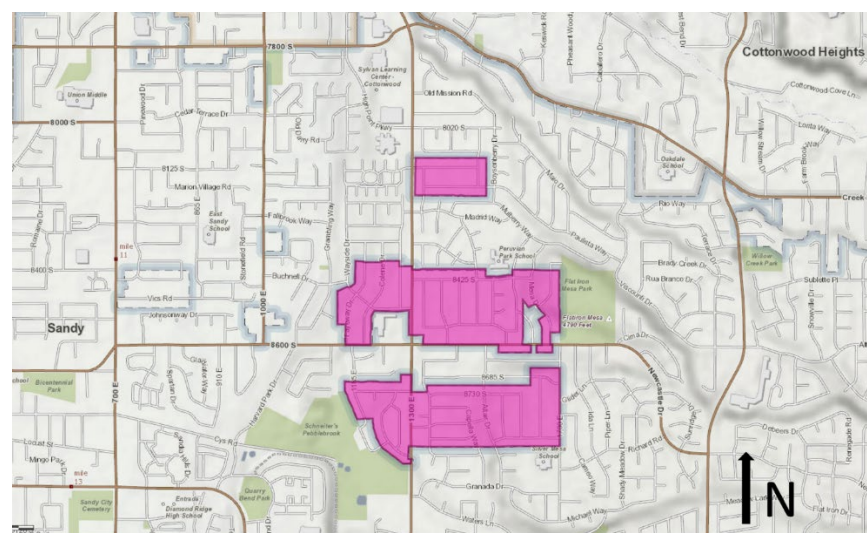
This technical assessment provides an overview of sociodemographic trends, land use conditions, and historical land use changes influencing the Sandy Hills community. The assessment is intended to provide planners, residents and other stakeholders with the data and context needed to make informed decisions regarding planning, policy, and community development for Sandy Hills. This document includes an overview of existing conditions, including population trends and demographics, data on Sandy Hills' housing stock and characteristics, an analysis of economic conditions in the community, and an analysis of historical and existing land uses. This document presents robust data for consideration, which the Sandy Hills community can use in their decision-making process.

1.2 Methodology

The Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District (MSD), contracted by Salt Lake County to provide planning services to Sandy Hills, is committed to providing communities with quality data. Data for this report was primarily gathered from Esri Community Analyst's detailed community profiles. The most recent data available was for the year 2020, with the exception of some projections used throughout the document for the year 2025. Some data was gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey ("ACS"). While Census data does not always perfectly capture the true population statistics for smaller areas such as Sandy Hills, it is the most complete and accurate dataset available. The Census data in this report comes from ACS 5-Year Estimates (or decennial census numbers where available), which aggregate data over a five-year time period to provide the best estimate of current conditions.

Figure 1 shows the geographic boundaries for which numbers were gathered. Data for Sandy Hills is often compared to that for Salt Lake County or the United States to give the reader a better understanding of the greater context of the area's sociodemographic trends.

Figure 1: Study Area, Unincorporated Community of Sandy Hills.



Source: MSD Long Range Planning, 2021.

1.3 Sandy Hills Community and History

Sandy Hills is an unincorporated community comprised of 224 acres, or 0.35 square miles, in the southeastern part of Salt Lake County, Utah (Community Analyst, 2020). The incorporated municipality Sandy City surrounds Sandy Hills and divides Sandy Hills into three separate areas (Figure 1). A minor arterial road, 1300 E, connects all three parts of Sandy Hills (UDOT Functional Class Map, 2020). The Wasatch Range rises to the east of Sandy Hills, and the community enjoys equidistant access (approximately five miles) to the Wasatch's Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons. [Approximately 2,118 people called Sandy Hills home in 2020](#) (Community Analyst, 2020).

The Sandy Hills area has a rich history. The benches along the Wasatch Mountain Range were originally traversed by nomadic bands of Bannock, Paiute, and Shoshone Indians as they traveled between their winter (Utah Lake) and summer (Bear Lake) homes (Utah History Encyclopedia, 1994). In the mid- to late-1800s, permanent settlers moved into the areas surrounding Sandy Hills (Utah History Encyclopedia, 1994). These were primarily pioneers with the Latter-Day Saints (LDS), who tried to make a living raising crops, despite the area's "sandy" soils (ibid).

An area nearby to Sandy Hills was settled by such pioneers in 1849 and named "Union" (Imlay, 2021). The community, in disputes with a neighboring tribe of Native Americans and worried about attack, built a protective wall around 10 acres of their land (Imlay, 2021). The twelve-foot high and six-foot thick wall encompassed a school that also served as the church and amusement hall, as well as twenty-three homes (ibid). Attack never came, and the wall was never completely finished. Remnants of Fort Union remained until the 1990s, when the area was demolished for the Fort Union commercial area located just 2.5 miles from the heart of Sandy Hills (ibid).

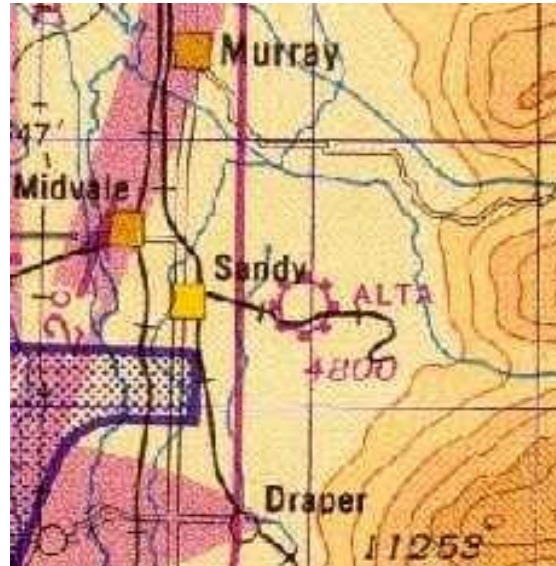
Shortly after the first settlers moved in, mining took off in the mountains surrounding Sandy Hills. Silver and granite mining in Little Cottonwood Canyon were particularly lucrative, with the Canyon even supplying the granite that built the LDS Temple in Salt Lake City (Utah.com, 2021). Mining in the area largely failed starting in the 1890s, and the surrounding communities reverted to agricultural industries for a time (Utah.com, 2021). In the 1900s, the area surrounding Sandy Hills continued to grow. Sandy City's neighborhoods sprawled out in all directions, and the 1960s and 1970s saw several annexation and resource battles, that eventually left the unincorporated Sandy Hills area with three isolated islands consisting of just approximately 0.35 square miles (Utah History Encyclopedia, 1994).

Perhaps the most interesting piece of history to Sandy Hills residents is that of the Alta Air Park, which occupied a location near the modern-day intersection of Richard Lane and Newcastle Drive from the mid-1900s to the 1970s. The history of the Air Park is largely documented through resident narratives, although the site is shown on a few sectional maps from the 1900s (including the one depicted in Figure 1B). The Air Park reportedly offered charter services and was a popular location for skydiving. One resident recalled her mother watching skydivers at Alta Air Park from their home,

"She'd stand in the backyard with her camera and take picture after picture. We made fun of her because when the weather was good the sky was always filled with those parachutes. We couldn't imagine it could ever be otherwise. But I guess she was right, a few years later the air park was gone, and people today can't imagine what it was like back then." (Melody Greenlief, Sandy Hills Resident)

Figure 1C shows a hangar at the Air Park, which reportedly offered just a handful of hangars, a dirt runway, and vast expanses of sagebrush. Prior to Alta's closing, residential development began to encroach on the Air Park's boundaries, including houses along aptly named Cessna (an aviation company) Circle, Glider Lane, and Piper Lane (Sandy Hills Resident Narratives, 2000s). When the Air Park closed in the 1970s, the area was quickly turned over to suburban development, and it had been built over by the 1980s. With few records left of the Alta Air Park, residents now living in the neighborhoods built over the top of it may have no idea what rich history lies beneath.

Figure 1B: Alta Airpark, Mapped



Source: Salt Lake Sectional Chart, 1948.

Figure 1C: Hangar at Alta Air Park



Source: Salt Lake County Archives, Date Unknown.

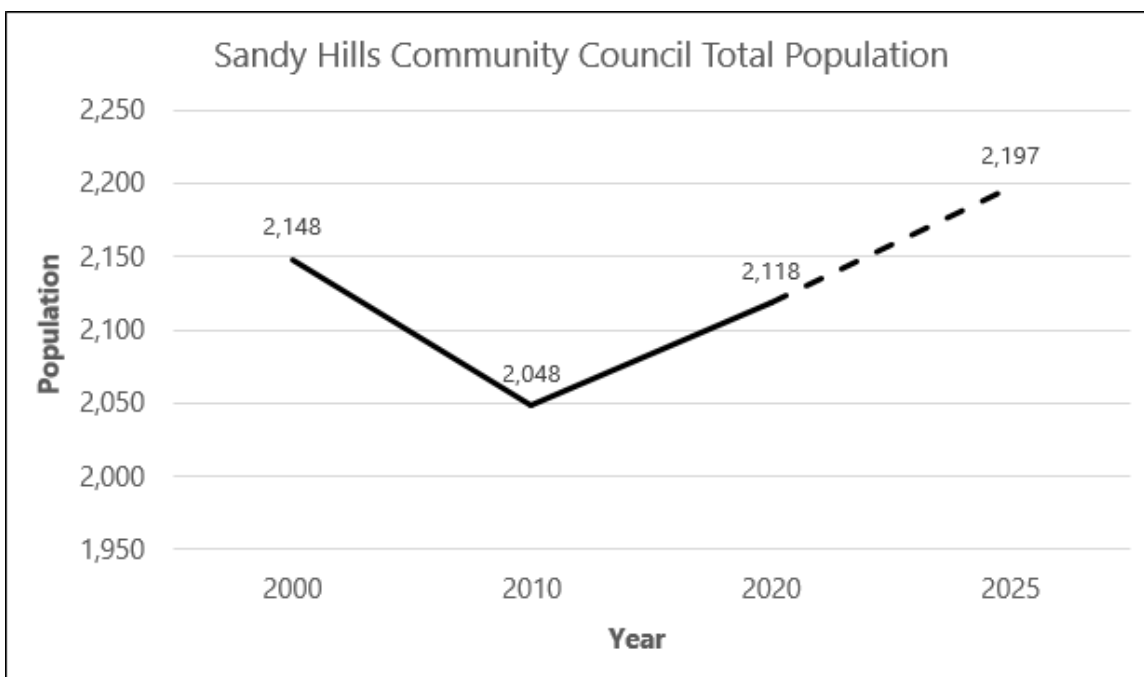
Today, Sandy Hills is almost entirely composed of residential development. Sandy Hills' neighborhoods enjoy close proximity to commercial, institutional, and recreational amenities offered in neighboring jurisdictions. The majority of Sandy Hills' services are provided by Salt Lake County and the Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District (MSD), and although the community of Sandy Hills has existed for some time, it remains unincorporated. Residents find their voice in decision-making processes primarily through the Sandy Hills Community Council (SHCC). The Community Council is a non-profit organization, composed of elected volunteers living in Sandy Hills. SHCC keeps residents informed on local issues and events, gathers feedback and concerns from residents, and shares the community's vision and preferences with service providers, including the County and MSD. Sandy Hills is also served by a County-employed Community Council Liaison and an elected County Council member.

2.0 Population, Housing, and Employment

2.1 Total Population

Sandy Hills has had a relatively stable population in the past two decades (Figure 2). Today, Sandy Hills is home to 2,118 people, which is only 70 more people than in 2010 and 30 fewer people than in 2000 (Community Analyst, 2020). Population projections indicate a growth rate of 0.75 percent per year between 2020 and 2025, or an additional 79 people over the course of the next five years (Community Analyst, 2020). Meanwhile, adjacent Sandy City is experiencing a slightly growing population. However, while Sandy City has grown from approximately 90,000 to 96,000 people between 2000 and 2019, Sandy City incorporated several areas into its borders during this timeframe (ACS, 2019). Sandy City will not likely grow significantly unless it annexes more land.

Figure 2: Sandy Hills Total Population, Historic and Projected.

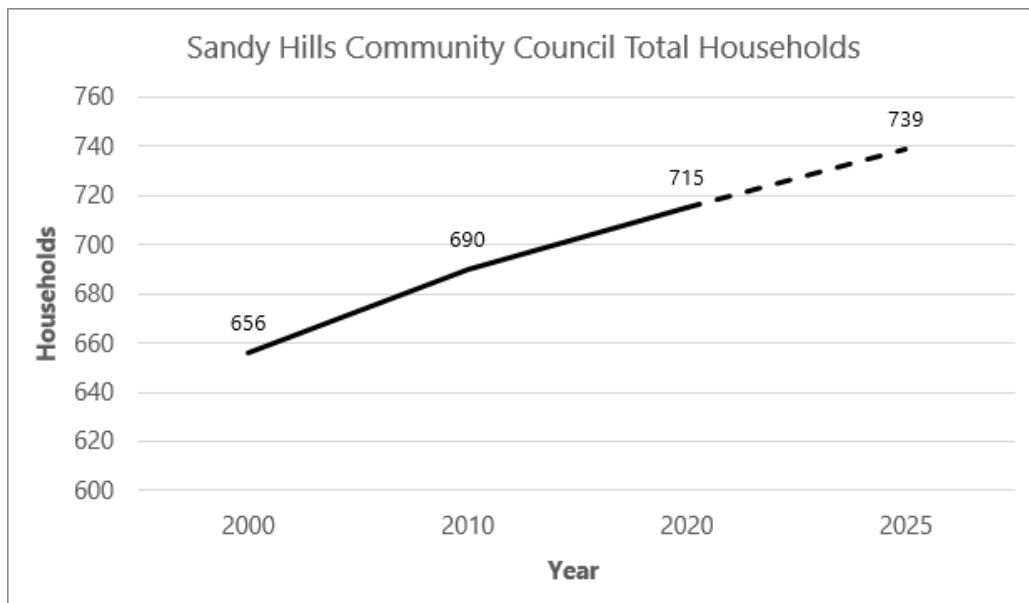


Source: Community Analyst – Community Profile, 2021.

2.2 Household Characteristics

Sandy Hills' 2,118 people live in 715 households (Community Analyst, 2020). The number of households has grown since 2000 and is expected to keep growing (Figure 3). However, average household size over this timeframe has remained steady, hovering between 2.96 and 2.97 people per household, which is similar to Salt Lake County household sizes (Community Analyst, 2020). 81.1 percent of households are composed of related individuals (families) while 18.9 percent of households are nonfamily households (Community Analyst, 2020). Additionally, multigenerational households comprise 5.4 percent of the total (Community Analyst, 2020).

Figure 3: Total Households in Sandy Hills, Historic and Projected.



Source: Community Analyst – Community Profile, 2021.

2.3 Esri Tapestries

Esri Business Analyst produces tapestry segment analyses for various geographies across the United States. These tapestry segments divide the population into groups based on sociodemographic status, shopping patterns, and place of residence. Esri's tapestry system classifies Sandy Hills into three segments: Savvy Suburbanites, Pleasantville, and Home Improvement (Community Analyst, 2020).

THE SAVVY SUBURBANITES tapestry segment (44.2% of the population) includes predominantly white married couple homeowners with no children or older children, for a median age of 45.1 years (Community Analyst, 2020). This segment stands out for its wealth, educational attainment, and active lifestyles. At \$108,700, Savvy Suburbanites enjoy twice the national median household income of \$56,100; they also enjoy five and a half times the national median net worth at \$518,100 (Community Analyst, 2020). College graduates comprise 51 percent of the segment, and another 27 percent of the segment has some college education (Community Analyst, 2020). Additionally, this segment likes to stay fit, whether by home remodeling, gardening, engaging in sports, exercising, or eating organic foods (Community Analyst, 2020).

THE PLEASANTVILLE tapestry segment (30.6% of population) stands out for its rootedness. Of Esri's 67 segments, this is the segment least likely to move (Community Analyst, 2020). The housing preferences of this segment reflects its high level of long-term settlement. This segment lives in primarily owned, older single-family homes; in fact, about half live in homes built between 1950 and 1969 (Community Analyst, 2020). However, by living in the suburban peripheries of larger metropolitan areas, Pleasantville suffers long travel times to work. Like Savvy Suburbanites, Pleasantville households enjoy higher wealth (\$92,900 median household income) (Community Analyst, 2020). Households are generally older white married couple with children over 18 years old; their median age is 42.6 years (Community Analyst, 2020).

THE HOME IMPROVEMENT tapestry segment (25.0% of population) is a notably average representation of the United States. While Savvy Suburbanites and Pleasantville have households with greater wealth, older median ages, lower diversity, and larger budgets than the national average, the Home Improvement tapestry segment resembles the national averages in most of these categories. Their diversity index is 65.7, slightly above the U.S.'s of 64.0 and almost double the Savvy Suburbanites' of 36.2 (Community Analyst, 2020). While all three of the segments present in Sandy Hills are defined primarily by married couple households, the Home Improvement households are younger, with more children under 18; their median age is 37.7 years (Community Analyst, 2020). This segment is still paying off student loans and home mortgages and has two or more workers per households (Community Analyst, 2020). The median household income of \$72,100 is larger than the national average but significantly lower than that of the Savvy Suburbanites and Pleasantville (Community Analyst, 2020). While cautious consumers, they spend money eating out and on home improvement projects (Community Analyst, 2020).

2.4 Age Characteristics

Since 2010, the Sandy Hills **population has aged**. The 2010 median age of 34.8 years increased to 37.4 years in 2020, and that median age is expected to keep rising to 39.2 years in 2025 (Community Analyst, 2020) (Figure 4). These median ages exceed those of Salt Lake County in the same time period. In comparison to the slowly aging and young population of the county as a whole, **Sandy Hills has an older population that is aging more quickly**. Despite its older median age, Sandy Hills does include 551 children (under 18 years) (Community Analyst, 2020). Additionally, 342 older adults (65 years and older) call Sandy Hills home (Community Analyst, 2020).

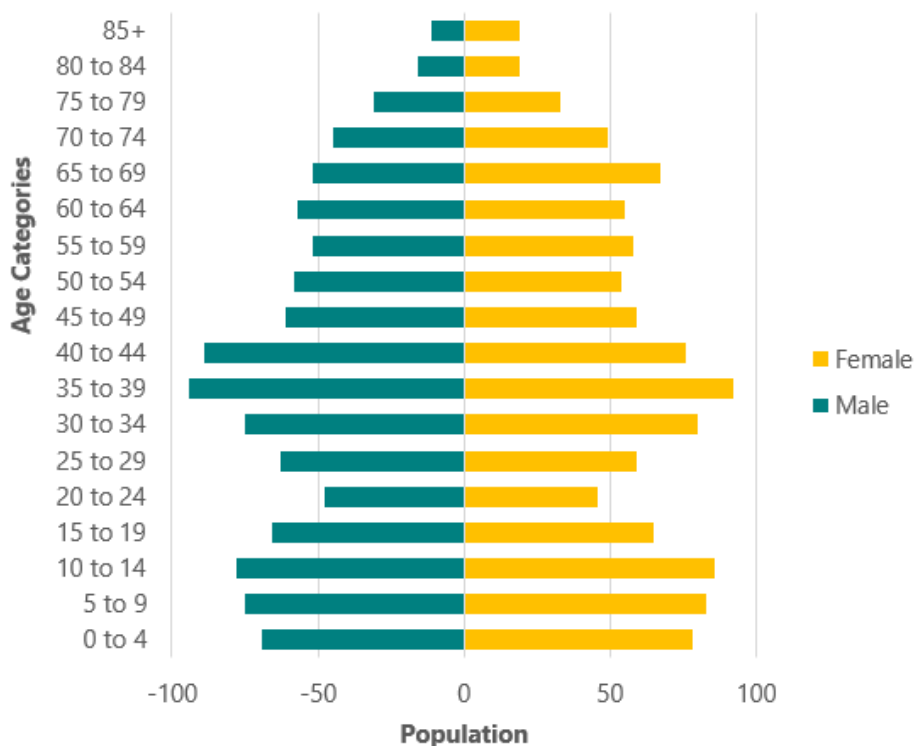
Figure 4: Median Age Historic and Projected.

	Median Age	
	Sandy Hills	Salt Lake County
2010	34.8	30.9
2020	37.4	32.7
2025*	39.2	33.3

Source: Community Analyst – Community Profile, 2021.

The breakdown of sex by age reveals other population patterns (Figure 5). The population is evenly split between female and male, with 50.8 percent female and 49.2 percent male (Community Analyst, 2020). Overall, many middle-aged individuals reside in Sandy Hills. The most populous age groups for males are ages 10-14, 35-39, and 40-44 years, while the most populous age groups for females are 5-9, 10-14, and 35-39 years. There are more girls than boys under 14 years old and more women than men over 65 years old; however, there are more men than women in every middle age group (15 to 54) except one (30-34). The number of 20 to 24-year-olds stands out as being much smaller than adjacent age groups. Likely, these young adults may leave for college or mission trips. Comparing the amount of younger people to the amount of older people, if the younger generations remain in Sandy Hills, they would almost sustain the population.

Figure 5: Age Pyramid for Sandy Hills, Showing Large Cohort of Middle-Aged (2019).

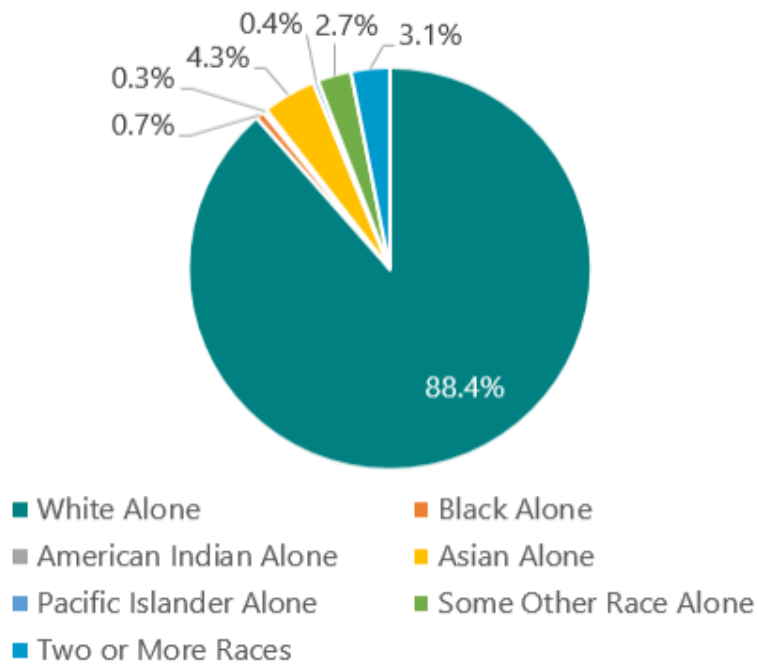


Source: Community Analyst – Community Profile, 2021.

2.5 Race and Ethnicity Characteristics

Historically, Sandy Hills has had a homogenous racial and ethnic makeup. 88.4 percent of residents identify as white alone (Community Analyst, 2020) (Figure 6). 11.6 percent of the population identify as a person of color (Community Analyst, 2020). The largest minority group is Asian, an identity held by 4.3 percent of the population (Community Analyst, 2020). However, 8.3 percent of the community of any race(s) identify as Latino/a or Hispanic (Community Analyst, 2020). This is significantly lower than the State of Utah value of 14.4 percent (American Community Survey Table DP05, 2019).

Figure 6: Self-Identified Race of Sandy Hills Residents.

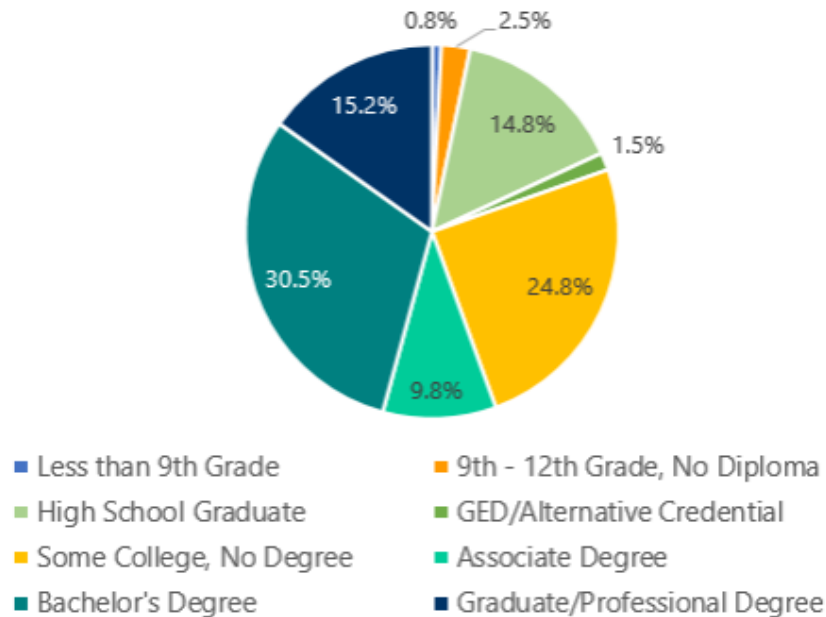


Source: Community Analyst – Community Profile, 2021.

2.6 Educational Attainment and Schooling

The Sandy Hills population boasts [high educational attainment](#) compared to Salt Lake County as a whole. Over 15 percent of the community has achieved a graduate or professional degree, and over 30 percent has earned a Bachelor's degree (Community Analyst, 2020) (Figure 7). This is compared to just 13.7% and 23.1% respectively (ibid). An additional 34.6 percent of Sandy Hills' residents have some college education or achieved an Associate degree (Community Analyst, 2020). Together, this means that 80.3 percent of the population has, at minimum, attended some college. Only 3.3 percent of the population has not earned a High School diploma (Community Analyst, 2020).

Figure 7: Educational Attainment of Sandy Hills Residents (2019).



Source: Community Analyst – Community Profile, 2021.

Students in this area primarily attend Canyons School District. Children in Sandy Hills attend three elementary schools: East Sandy, Peruvian Park, and Silver Mesa, depending upon the location of their home (Canyons School District, 2020). The majority of Sand Hills households live within the service area of Peruvian Park Elementary School. All of Sandy Hills falls within the Union Middle School and Hillcrest High School boundaries (Canyons School District, 2020). Major research universities and technical schools are within easy commutes, including the University of Utah (22-minute drive north), Brigham Young University (47-minute drive south), and Salt Lake Community College: Jordan Campus (14-minute drive west) (Google Maps, 2020).

2.7 Housing Characteristics

There were an [estimated 725 housing units in Sandy Hills in 2020, only 10 of which were vacant](#) (Community Analyst, 2020). The vast majority of Sandy Hills’ residents own their place of occupancy, and owner occupation has increased over time (Figure 8). That pattern is likely to remain the same through 2025.

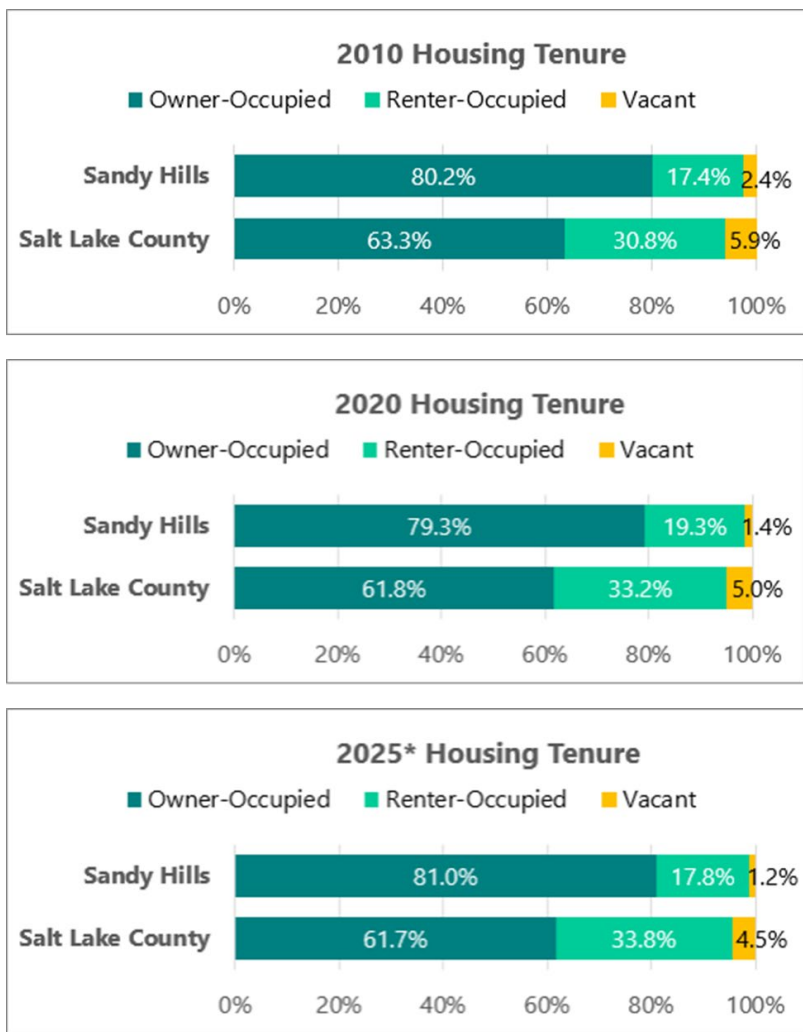
About 73 percent of owner-occupied housing units have housing debt, while about 27 percent of owner-occupied housing units have no mortgage (Community Analyst, 2020). [18.7 percent of owner-occupied households with a mortgage pay more than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs](#) (Community Analyst, 2020). By paying over 30 percent of their income on housing, those households are considered cost-burdened. Cost-burdened households have limited “rainy day” funds and are at-risk for being unable to keep up with housing payments or to pay for emergency occurrences.

In 2020, Median gross rent for the 101 renter-occupied households is \$1,686 dollars per month (Community Analyst, 2020). With utilities, most rental households would pay about \$1,936 per month; to afford that rent, yearly household income would need to be at least \$77,440. 41.7 percent of rental households are cost-burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs (Community Analyst, 2020).

Owner-occupied housing units have a median value of \$346,415, with the vast majority (76.2 percent) valuing between \$250,000 and \$500,000 (Community Analyst, 2020). With Salt Lake County's in-demand housing environment, values will likely continue to increase.

385 units, or 54.5 percent of the housing stock, were built between 1970 and 1979 (Community Analyst, 2020). Another 149 units, or 21.1 percent, date from before 1970 (Community Analyst, 2020), and these are likely unreinforced masonry structures. Only 2.2 percent of housing units (16 units) have been constructed in the most recent decade (Community Analyst, 2020).

Figure 8: Sandy Hills Housing Tenure (2010, 2019, and 2025*).



Source: Community Analyst – Housing Profile, 2021.

2.8 Income and Budget

Per capita income is a measure of the average income earned by an individual. Sandy Hills per capita income in 2020 is \$35,484 (Community Analyst, 2020). In 2025, that value is predicted to increase to \$39,894 (Community Analyst, 2020). Another common metric for understanding socioeconomic conditions in a place is median household income, which is the middle amount of income if all incomes were lined up from lowest to highest. As indicated by the tapestry segments, Sandy Hills' median household income of \$95,280 significantly exceeds the national and county median household incomes of \$56,100 and \$76,410, respectively (Community Analyst, 2020) (Figure 9). Despite a high median household income, not all households in Sandy Hills have high incomes. While 29 percent of households earn between \$100,000 and \$150,000, 9.2 percent make under \$35,000 per year (Community Analyst, 2020).

Figure 9: Median Household Income for Sandy Hills and Salt Lake County, Current and Projected.



Source: Community Analyst – Household Income Profile, 2021.

The average total yearly expenditure is \$88,922.75 per household (Community Analyst, 2020). Almost one-third of average annual household expenditures go to housing (Community Analyst, 2020) (Figure 10). Food and pensions and social security round out the top three expenditure categories.

Figure 10: Sandy Hills Average Annual Household Expenditures (2020).

Average Annual Household Expenditures		\$88,922.75
Housing		31.60%
Food		11.30%
Pensions and Social Security		11.30%
Transportation		10.90%
Health Care		7.30%
Entertainment and Recreation		4.20%
Travel		3.40%
Support Payments / Cash Contributions / Gifts in Kind		3.00%
Household Operations		2.90%
Household Furnishings and Equipment		2.90%
Apparel and Services		2.70%
Education		2.70%
Personal Care Products & Services		1.20%
Housekeeping Supplies		0.90%
Alcoholic Beverages		0.80%
Life / Other Insurance		0.70%
Smoking Products		0.40%
Legal Fees		0.20%
Accounting Fees		0.20%
Lotteries and Pari-mutuel Losses		0.10%
Funeral Expenses		0.10%
Miscellaneous Personal Services / Advertising / Fines		0.10%
Occupational Expenses		0.10%
Expenses for Other Properties		0.10%

Source: Community Analyst – Household Budget Expenditures, 2021.

Compared to the average U.S. household, Sandy Hills households spend far above the average in several categories, as measured by the Spending Potential Index. The Spending Potential Index shows average community household spending compared to the U.S. average, which is given the value of 100; thus, any value above 100 indicates greater spending than the U.S. average. Sandy Hills has Spending Potential Index values of 133 for education, 132 for accounting fees, and 131 for occupational expenses (Community Analyst, 2020). This suggests that the community is willing to spend significant money on these categories. Among all categories listed in Esri's Spending Potential Index, only smoking products and checking account/banking service charges have values under 100 for Sandy Hills (Community Analyst, 2020).

2.9 Internet Access and Preferences

Sandy Hills enjoys [high rates of Internet access](#). Almost 97 percent of residents have access to Internet service at home, which exceeds the county-wide rate of 93.5 percent (Esri Community Analyst, 2021). Although access to Internet is high, household ownership of computers is less so – at 87.7% (ibid). That means over 1 in 10 households does not have access to a computer. Residents may be accessing Internet service over mobile phones or other devices that are less conducive to remote work or learning. Over one-fifth of the population of Sandy Hills spends five or more hours online daily, and the top social media platforms utilized by residents include Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (ibid).

2.10 Employment and Business

Of the 1,621 potential workers (population aged 16+), 1,118 are employed (Community Analyst, 2020). 78 people are unemployed, making an [unemployment rate of 6.5 percent](#) (Community Analyst, 2020). This high rate in 2020 is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted the global economy. About 73 percent of the workforce are employed in white collar jobs, which is reflected in the top industries by employment: professional/scientific/technology employs the most residents, while health care/social assistance employs the second most (Community Analyst, 2020) (Figure 11).

Sandy Hills had 15 licensed businesses in May of 2021 according to MSD records. All but one of these were home-based businesses.

Figure 11: Sandy Hills' Employment Characteristics (2020).

Sandy Hills	
<u>Top 5 Industries by Employment</u>	
1. Professional / Scientific / Tech	122
2. Health Care / Social Assistance	114
3. Retail Trade	113
4. Manufacturing	104
5. Educational Services	102
<u>Industries with Strong Local Specialization (Location Quotient)</u>	
1. Management of Companies	LQ 4.00
2. Finance / Insurance	LQ 1.76
3. Transportation / Warehousing	LQ 1.36
4. Professional / Scientific / Tech	LQ 1.33
5. Admin / Support / Waste Management	LQ 1.31
2020 Unemployment Rate, Population 16+	6.50%
2020 Labor Force Participation Rate	73.80%
<u>Class of Worker</u>	
White Collar	72.50%
Blue Collar	18.70%
Services	8.80%

Source: Community Analyst – Civilian Labor Force Profile, 2021.

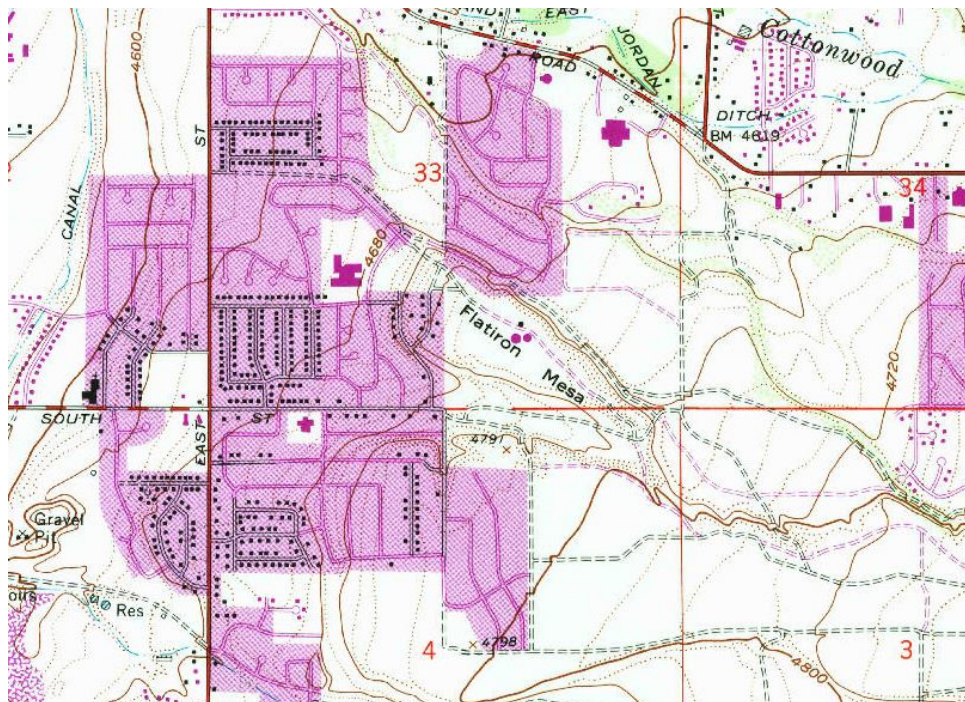
3.0 Land Use and Zoning

3.1 History of Area Annexations

The history of the development of land throughout Salt Lake County since the early 1900s is rich. Three major factors influenced the pattern of incorporation during the 20th century: a community's relative location, the fortunes of extractive industries, and potential sales tax revenue.

While today Sandy Hills occupies 224.7 acres, Sandy Hills's prior expanse was much larger. Up through 1970, Sandy Hills' two separate islands were connected in a continuous block; this block occupied most of the land area between 9100 South and 7700 South and between 885 East and the foothills to the west. Figure 11B shows the boundaries of Sandy Hills Unincorporated Area from 1952 to 1968. By 1980, much of this area was incorporated into Sandy City, leaving behind eleven discontinuous unincorporated areas. Among the eleven islands created were today's three remaining unincorporated islands that identify as the Sandy Hills community.

Figure 11B: Sandy Hills Unincorporated Area Boundaries, 1952 to 1968.



Source: Sandy Hills Community Council, Date Unknown.

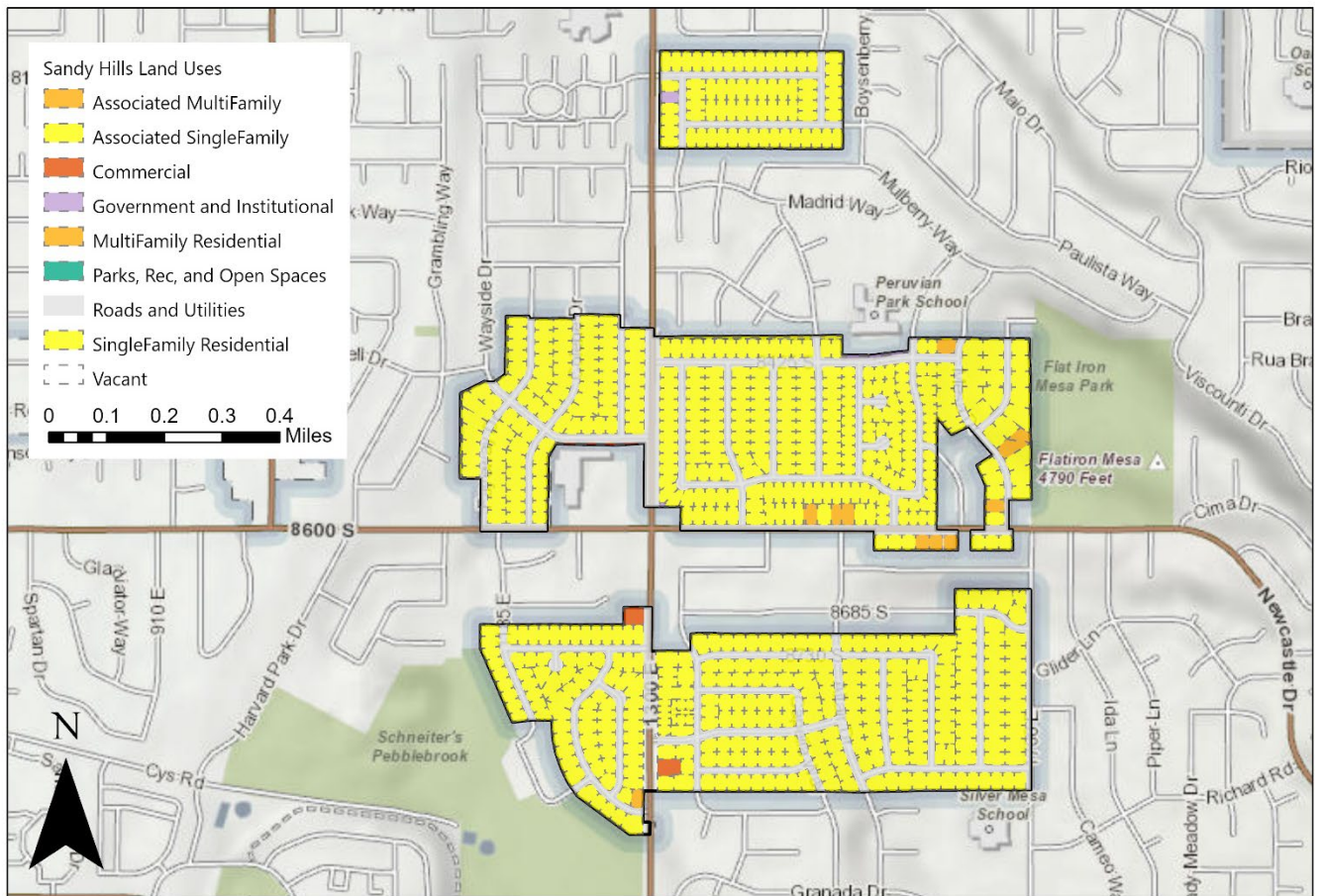
Between 1980 and 1990, several more unincorporated areas were annexed into Sandy City. At this time, there were ten unincorporated islands, and several of the islands shrunk in size too. By 2000, the unincorporated areas were divided and shrunk even more, leaving fifteen islands. Most of these islands were only a few to a few dozen parcels large. [Small islands have continued to be slowly annexed into Sandy City since 2000.](#)

3.2 Current Land Use

Current Land Use describes the uses established on a property. It is different from zoning which explains how a piece of land is regulated (including use and development standards). For example, three parcels may share a Single-Family Residential (R-1-6) zoning designation. However, between these three parcels, the land use may differ: one property may be vacant, the second may have a single-family home, and the third may host an elementary school. While zoning and land use are connected, they are not one in the same. Sandy Hills contains 880 parcels (WFRC, 2019) (Figure 12). The WFRC uses aerial imagery and geospatial analysis to categorize these parcels into various uses: single family residential; multifamily residential; commercial; government and institutional; parks, recreation, and open spaces; roads and utilities; and vacant. **Single-Family Residential is the most common land use** in the community. Descriptions of Sandy Hills' land uses can be found below:

- **Single-Family Residential:** 784 parcels, taking up 189.0 acres, are used for single family residential (including 'associated' single family), leaving 96 parcels for other uses. The median parcel size is 0.23 acres. 774 housing units sit on these 784 parcels.
- **Multi-Family Residential:** 16 parcels are used for multifamily residential (including 'associated' multifamily). These parcels include 25 multifamily units sitting on 4.4 acres.
- **Commercial:** 6 parcels have commercial uses. These parcels take up 7.6 acres and offer 89,033 square feet of commercial building space. The median building size is 9,910 square feet, and the median parcel size is 0.6 acres.
- **Government and Institutional:** 6 parcels have government or institutional uses. These parcels occupy 0.24 acres.
- **Vacant:** 2 parcels are vacant. They occupy only 0.02 acres.
- *The remaining acreage in Sandy Hills is dedicated to roads and utilities.*

Figure 12: Current Land Uses in Sandy Hills.

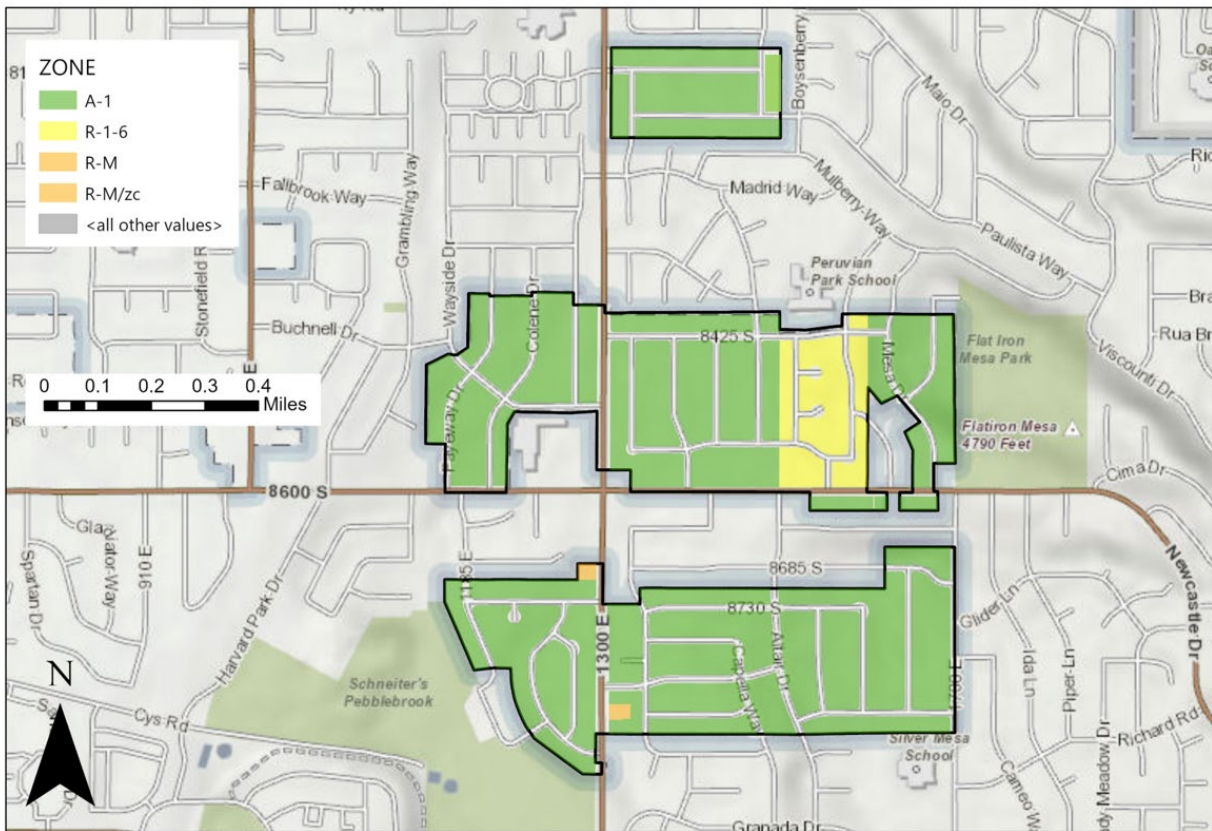


Sandy Hills is surrounded primarily by residential and recreational uses, such as Flat Iron Mesa Park to the east and Pebblebrook Golf Course to the southwest. Limited commercial development exists at the intersection of 1300 E and 8600 S, adjacent to Sandy Hills. However, grocery stores and other essential goods and services are located a couple of miles outside of the community in all directions.

3.3 Zoning Analysis

Zoning describes how a piece of land *may be* used according to code, while ‘Land Use’ (analyzed in the previous section) describes how land *is currently* being used. Zoning and land use are generally consistent in Sandy Hills. **There are three zones currently applied in the community: Agricultural (A-1), Single Family Residential (R-1-6), and Multi-Family Residential (Figure 13).** These zones are described in greater detail in Table 14.

Figure 13: Sandy Hills' Zoning, 2021.



There are large similarities between the Agricultural Zone and the R-1-6 Zone applied in Sandy Hills. Both zones allow for agricultural uses, home daycares and preschools, and single-family residential. Multi-family uses are largely discouraged in these zones, although there are some exceptions for small-scale multi-family buildings in the Agricultural Zone. The maximum residential density for these areas ranges from 4.0 to 8.0 dwelling units per acre (Table 14).

The Residential Zone (R-M) differs significantly from the other two zoning districts present in Sandy Hills; however, this zone is only applied in two locations (for 1.4 acres total). The R-M zone permits all of the uses in the A-1 and R-1-6 zones, but also adds additional options for multi-family residential development. Duplexes are considered permitted uses in this zone, while other multi-family developments are allowed as conditional uses. The code sets a maximum density for multi-family residential development at 25.0 dwelling units per acre, although various conditions must be met for the Planning Commission to award such a density. There is no maximum density listed for Rail Transit Mixed-Use. However, neither of the R-M sites within Sandy Hills are located within ¼ mile of a rail stop, meaning that they do not qualify for Rail Transit Mixed-Use currently. This could change if TRAX infrastructure extends to the east bench of southern Salt Lake County in the future.

Table 14: Zones Applied to Sandy Hills.

Zone	Total Acreage	Permitted Uses	Prohibited Uses	Max Residential Density
Agricultural (A-1)	265.0	Agriculture (commercial or household), Single Family Residential, Home Daycare / Preschool	Industrial Uses, Multi-Family Residential (with limited exception)	Single Family: 4.0 du per acre Two-Family Dwellings: 8.0 du per acre
Single Family Residential (R-1-6)	23.6	Agriculture, Home Business, Home Daycare / Preschool, Single Family Residential	Commercial and Industrial Uses, Multi-Family Residential	6.0 du per acre
Residential (RM)	1.4	Agriculture, Home Business, Home Daycare / Preschool, Single Family Residential, Duplexes	Industrial Uses	Single Family: 7.0 du per acre Two Family: 12.0 du per acre Three Family: 15.0 du per acre Four Family: 18.0 du per acre Multi Family: 25.0 du per acre Rail Transit Mixed Use: No Max

Source: Salt Lake County Zoning Ordinance (Title 19), 2021.

4.0 Transportation

4.1 Commuting Patterns and Preferences

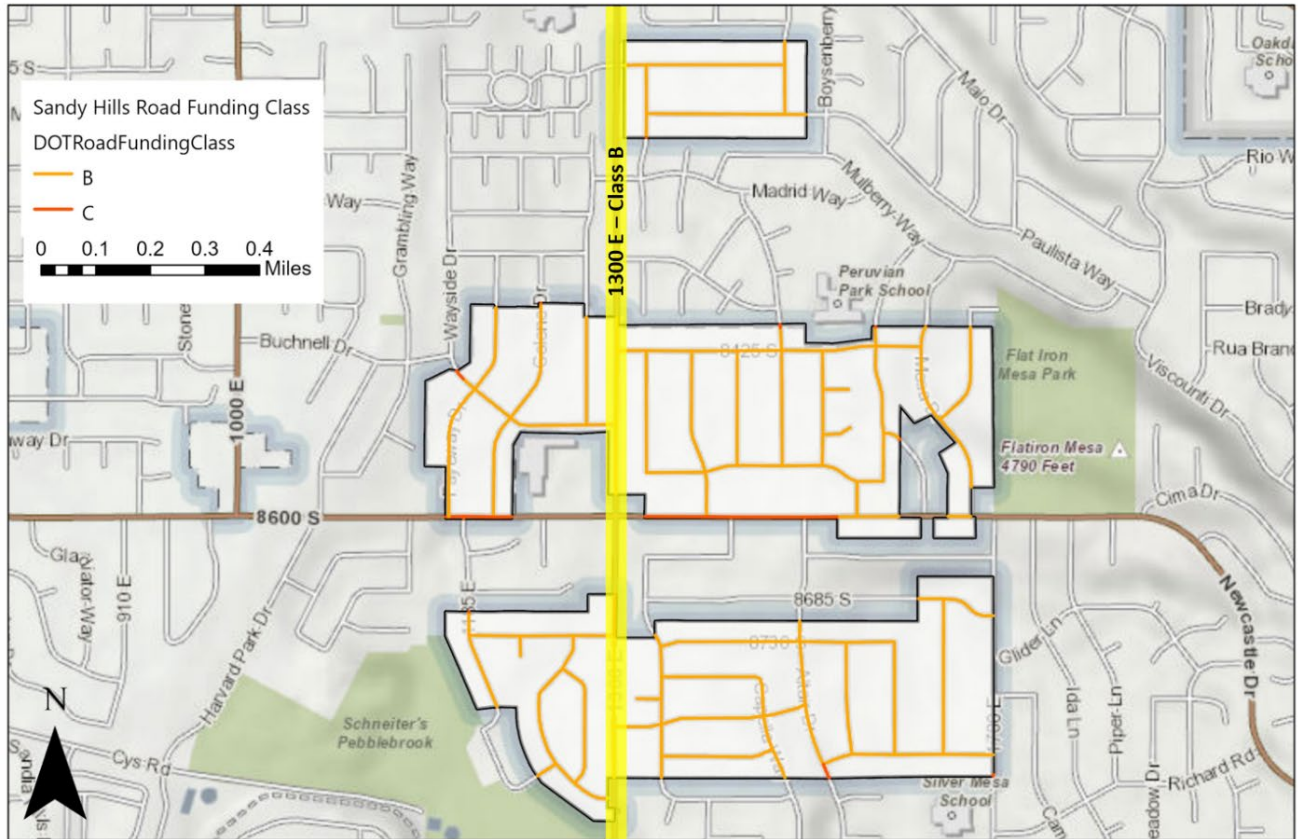
The majority (94.8%) of Sandy Hills' workers 16 years and older were employed in Salt Lake County as of 2018 (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014 to 2018). Nearly 5% of the population worked in a different county in Utah, and the remaining 0.4% of workers were employed out of State (ibid). Although most Sandy Hills' workers are employed within the County, commutes can still be long. As of 2018, only 8% of workers had a commute shorter than ten minutes, while 10% had a commute longer than 34 minutes (ibid). The remaining workers had an average commute between 10 and 34 minutes in 2018.

In 2018, 'Driving Alone' was the most common means of transportation to work among Sandy Hills residents (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014 to 2018). Nearly 75% of workers drove alone to their place of employment (ibid). However, carpooling and working from home were also popular; 12.0% of Sandy Hills' workers carpoolled to work in 2018, while 10.2% worked from home (ibid). The latter percentage likely increased following the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a greater percentage of people telecommuting or engaging in remote education nationally.

4.2 Class B & C Roads

In the State of Utah, communities receive state funding based on a formula of Class B and C Road mileage and population. There are 9.8 miles of Class B roads and 0.6 miles of Class C roads in the boundaries of Sandy Hills (Figure 15). Class B Roads are designated as county roads and are maintained by Salt Lake County. These include most roads within Sandy Hills. Class C Roads are city streets maintained by independent municipalities. 8600 S is the only Class C Road that traverses Sandy Hills. Sandy City is primarily responsible for maintenance of this roadway.

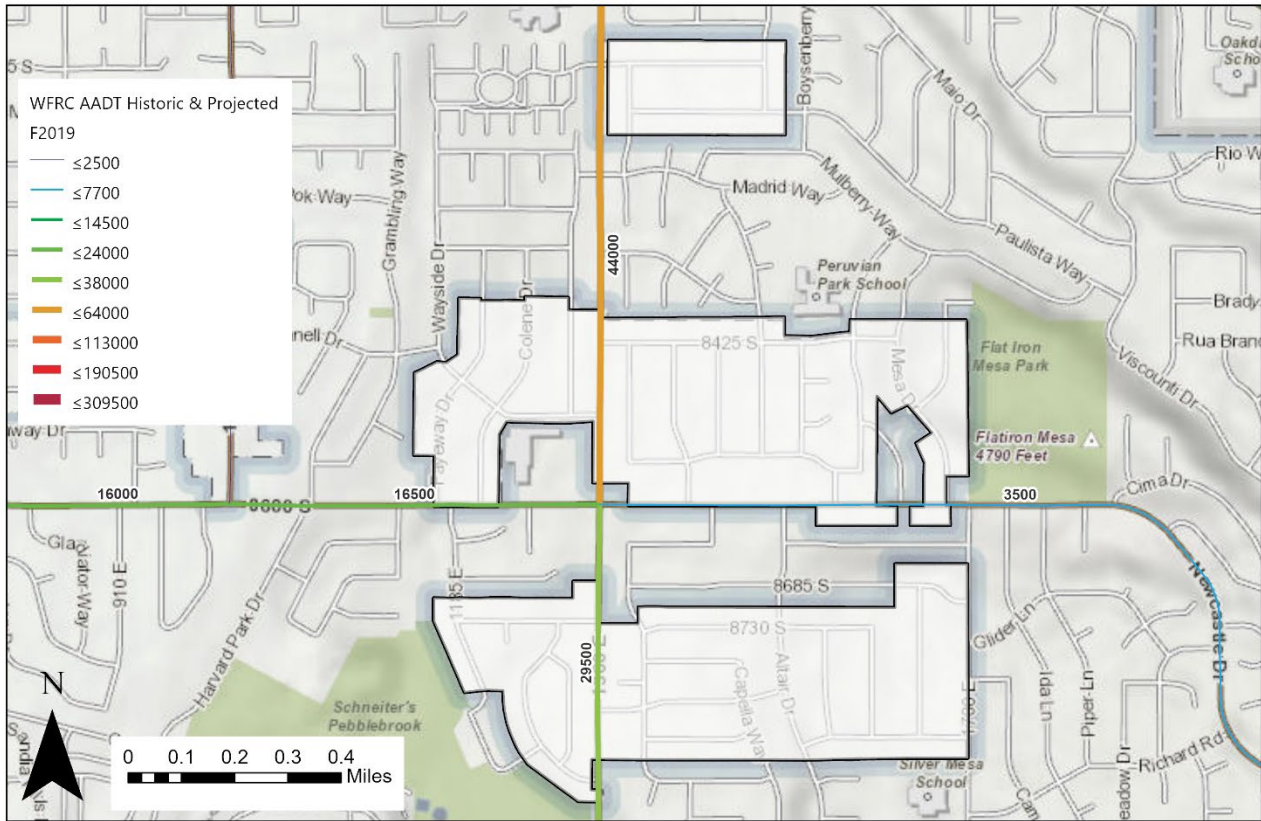
Figure 15: Sandy Hills Class B & C Roads.



4.3 Traffic Counts

Traffic counts are only available for two streets within Sandy Hills: 1300 E and 8600 S. Figure 16 shows the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) load experienced on each street in 2019. 1300 E, running north to south through Sandy Hills saw considerable traffic, with an average of 44,000 vehicles counted daily (north of 8600 S). This street connects Sandy Hills to major destinations in Salt Lake City as well as southern Salt Lake County. However, the [heavy traffic on the street may serve as a barrier to people walking and biking from east to west](#). As 8600 S meets 1300 E from the west, traffic counts averaged at 16,500 vehicles per day. However, counts decrease moving east out of Sandy Hills, to approximately 3,500 AADT.

Figure 16: 2019 Traffic Counts for 1300 E and 8600 S through Sandy Hills.



Source: MSD Long Range Planning, with layers from WFRD (2019).

5.0 Services and Governance

5.1 Service Providers

Sandy Hills receives services from numerous entities, including the Unified Police Department, the Unified Fire Authority, the Wasatch Front Waste and Recycling District, Salt Lake County, and the Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District.

[The Unified Police Department \(UPD\)](#): serves Sandy Hills's law enforcement needs through its Southeast Communities division. This division also serves White City, Granite, Willow Canyon, and Willow Creek. The precinct office is located in Midvale, approximately four miles from the Sandy Hills community.

[The Unified Fire Authority \(UFA\)](#): provides fire and emergency response services, including life support, 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, including unincorporated Salt Lake County. The two closest fire stations are Station 113 – Snowbird in Little Cottonwood Canyon and Station 116 – Wasatch in Cottonwood Heights.

[Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District \(JVWCD\)](#): provides culinary water service to Sandy Hills. Water provided by JVWCD comes from four sources: the Upper Provo River Reservoirs, Jordanelle Reservoir, Deer Creek Reservoir, or groundwater (harvested through wells).

[Cottonwood Improvement District \(CID\)](#): collects and treats wastewater in areas covering portions of Cottonwood Heights, Sandy, Murray, Midvale, and Unincorporated Salt Lake County, including Sandy Hills. Wastewater collected by CID is sent to the Central Valley Water Reclamation facility to be cleaned and treated; it is then discharged into the Jordan River.

[Wasatch Front Waste and Recycling District \(WFWRD\)](#): collects and hauls trash, yard waste, and recyclables for more than thirteen communities in the Salt Lake Valley, including Sandy Hills.

[Salt Lake County](#): governs Sandy Hills. The Salt Lake County Council is the land use authority for the community, and Sandy Hills is served by the Salt Lake County Planning Commission. The County additionally provides the following services to Sandy Hills' residents: Animal Services, Solid Waste (Landfill), Flood Control Engineering, Emergency Preparedness Services, Public Works Engineering, and Public Works Operations.

[The Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District \(MSD\)](#): was established in 2015 to provide certain municipal services to unincorporated Salt Lake County, the Metro Townships, and the Town of Brighton, including planning and development services. The MSD is a Local District, created under the “Special District Code 17B 2a-1101.” The MSD, together with the governmental alliance of the Metro Townships, has formed the first District of its kind in the United States. The MSD is responsible for Sandy Hills’ planning and development services. These include business licensing, building inspections and permitting, land use application review, addressing, code enforcement, and long-range planning. The MSD maintains several dashboards and reporting tools for its residents. According to the [MSD Performance Dashboard](#), 15 business licenses and 37 building permits were issued in Sandy Hills between January 2020 and March 2021. Additionally, there were 17 code enforcement cases in this period; violations can be reported by residents via the [MSD Citizen Problem Reporter Tool](#). Reports are sent directly to staff members responsible for servicing the area.

[Sandy Hills Community Council \(Sandy Hills CC\)](#): volunteer group established by Salt Lake County Ordinance to act as a liaison between the County (land use authority) and residents of the unincorporated areas. The Sandy Hills CC meets monthly to discuss infrastructure projects, planning initiatives, legislative changes, and other matters of importance to the community. While the Community Council does not have any land use authority, they are authorized to make recommendations to the Planning Commission regarding certain developments and projects. Salt Lake County engineers and Council members meet with the Sandy Hills CC to determine annual priorities for capital funding projects.

5.2 Costs and Revenue

Sales taxes and Class B & C Road Funds from Salt Lake County, including Sandy Hills, are sent to the MSD to cover service provision and fund capital projects. Every year, communities work with elected officials to determine their capital funding priorities. This could include sidewalk repair, road repaving, park construction, or other large projects. A prioritized list of funding requests from all of the Metro Townships, Unincorporated areas, and Town of Brighton is submitted to the MSD Board for consideration. Other funding requests for Unincorporated Salt Lake County are submitted by the County Council to the MSD Board for approval. Salt Lake County also approves a budget annually for the Sandy Hills Community Council. While this budget is paid using sales taxes and road funds, the MSD Board is not involved in the determination of the funding amount. The Community Council submits a request to the County Council, who decides how much they are willing to pay out to the Community Council for that year. Funding constraints will continue to impact Sandy Hills, although the chances of a community-desired project being funded is likely to increase with the support and/or championing of members of the County Council.

Estimating Sandy Hills' Revenue Generated: Data on annual sales tax revenues are available for the entirety of Unincorporated Salt Lake County, of which Sandy Hills is a part. Between August 2017 and May 2020, the Unincorporated portion of the County generated 17.2 million dollars in sales tax revenues (MSD Dashboard, 2021). In 2020 alone, 4.3 million dollars were generated in the Unincorporated areas (MSD Dashboard, 2021). As 11,883 people call these unincorporated areas home, we can provide a simple estimation that 362 dollars in sales tax revenue were generated per person in Unincorporated Salt Lake County (GSL MSD 2020 Budget). If this per-person rate was extrapolated to Sandy Hills, with a population of 2,118, we would estimate that Sandy Hills generated approximately 766,422 dollars in sales tax in 2020.

Services and costs, particularly as they pertain to infrastructure maintenance and fiscal responsibility will continue to be explored through the general plan process.

6.0 References and Resources

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Additional Resources

Esri Community Analyst Reports cited in this assessment, as well as maps created by the MSD, are available upon request. Please contact Kayla Mauldin, KMauldin@msd.utah.gov.