INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE PROJECT TEAM

The team that worked to develop this report is made up of students from the Small Towns & Resort Planning Graduate Workshop course, taught by Bruce Parker, AICP. This course explores the unique complexities and variety of small towns and resort communities in the United States and around the world. The class provides opportunities to work directly with communities in providing a valuable planning product and experience. This is done by engaging in plans for small towns or resort communities such as Midway.

The students are pursuing either a Master of City & Metropolitan Planning (MCMP) or a Master in Real Estate Development degree. Together, the class brings a great mix of exposure to the understanding of the planning process and what it takes to plan for great cities and resort towns. This team is enriched with a variety of life experiences and backgrounds from around the world, which in turn, should enrich this report on Midway’s Town Square.

ABOUT THE REPORT

The Midway Town Square Analysis and Opportunities Report was compiled over a three month period during the Spring 2020 academic semester. The report is intended to provide an overview of various planning and urban design opportunities regarding the Midway Town Square (the area between N 200 W and N Center St., and W Main St. and W 100 N) and adjacent areas. The concepts expounded herein may also be applied to other pertinent areas within the City. The concepts introduce the site’s context and existing land uses while delivering a powerful, written and visual narrative on how the site may be employed to a higher potential. The principles introduced were intended to be aspirational yet pragmatic, while reflecting the City’s desire to become a greater, regional tourist destination. This document is intended to be used by City officials, the development and business sectors, residents, and other stakeholders as a reference to how the Town Square and other essential areas are to look, feel, and function cohesively. As the guidelines within this document are observed, Midway will become a greater place to feel at home, have unforgettable experiences, and enjoy greater economic success.
INTRODUCTION

BRIEF HISTORY OF MIDWAY

The construction of a wagon road in 1858 allowed for the first settlers to arrive in the Midway area, resulting in the development of two small communities, the ‘Upper Settlement’ and the ‘Lower Settlement’ along Snake Creek. Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, the area saw the expansion of livestock, farming, timber extraction, and sawmill industries.

Starting as a fort at the midpoint between these two communities in 1866, Midway was a place of protection for settlers from native peoples in the region. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s, Swiss Settlers began to arrive in the valley, bringing with them a love of the mountains, the valley, and their Swiss culture.

As the population of the valley grew, the addition of a commercial gristmill, smithies, retail stores, a grocery store, and a mercantile store helped to diversify and grow the economy. Nearby mines in the region also impacted Midway, offering employment, growth, and other opportunities for people.

The discovery of hot-water springs around Midway led to the development of several resorts at the end of the 19th Century, such as Schneitter’s Hot Pots, which is now known as Homestead, and Luke’s Hot Pots later renamed the Mountain Spa.

Officially incorporated as a town in 1891, Midway would go on to see the addition of culinary water in 1895, telephone lines in 1897, and hydroelectric power by 1910. In 1912 a schoolhouse was constructed using ‘potrock,’ which is a native rock in the area.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Midway underwent significant civic improvements in the community, some of which were Great Depression Works Progress Administration projects. These improvements include the addition of concrete sidewalks and the building that today serves as the Town Hall.

This era also saw the establishment of the Midway Booster Club, which still plays a significant part in community events and community improvements in Midway. Today, Midway still holds onto much as its agricultural roots, while also expanding into an important recreation destination in the Heber Valley. It is expected that these changes will continue, as the demography and economy in Midway continues to shift and change over the next several decades.

Figure 1. Midway Brass Band, November 28, 1899 in front of John Watkins home in Midway

A VISION FOR TOWN SQUARE

Midway’s Town Square is a vital component to the civic and cultural life of the city and its residents. Town Square is currently providing a mix of uses, including recreational opportunities, community amenities, and city council activities, all intended to serve the needs of locals and visitors. The prominent structure within Town Square is the Town Hall building. Constructed in 1941, the building style is representative of the Swiss heritage embodied throughout Midway. Swiss heritage is further exemplified by the Swiss Days festival that is hosted on the square’s grounds every year in late summer. As new uses and visions for the Town Square develop, preserving the Swiss ambiance will be important in maintaining the historic value of the square.

As a centrally located public space, there is an opportunity for the community to envision the Town Square as not only a space that serves a few key uses, but as a place that is central to the daily social life in Midway. The purpose of this Town Square Report is to guide the vision of the square by identifying opportunities for improvements that help to achieve this vision.

The community envisions Town Square as an active gathering place that provides cultural, recreational, and economic benefit to the residents, businesses, and city employees of Midway.

Using this vision for Town Square, opportunities identified were outlined using a set of key principles:

- Embrace the community identity and heritage of Midway.
- Increase public activity in and around Town Square.
- Improve the landscaping and green infrastructure of the site.
- Improve mobility in and around the Town square.
- Facilitate economic development and support local business.
MIDWAY AT-A-GLANCE

3893 → 5257
Population in 2010
Population in 2018

1848 HOUSEHOLDS

54.9% FEMALE

$77,495
Median Household Income

2.64 AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

23.4 MINUTES MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK

98.7% HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR HIGHER

47.5% BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER

77.7% owner-occupied housing units
Midway’s Town Hall and Community Center buildings are currently used for a variety of community events and activities. The open space located in Town Square is also used for outdoor events and activities such as open markets, concerts and sports.

Examples of activities that occur at the Town Square space during the calendar year include:

- The Independence Day Celebration
- Swiss Days
- Outdoor ice skating rink
- Christmas tree lighting ceremony
- High Valley Arts performances
- Cowboy Poetry Gathering
- The Annual Midway City Town Party
- Plein Air Paradise Art Exhibit/Competition & Sale
- Annual Christmas Creche
- Group Meditation Classes
- Tennis courts
- City council meetings
- Outdoor theater events

Location and Neighborhood Context

Town Square is centrally located on Midway’s Main Street.
- Perimeter streets: Main Street to the south (UDOT road), 200 West to the west (UDOT road), 100 North to the north (city road), and 100 West to the east (city road).
- Town Square is located on the western edge of the town center along Main Street.

Direct neighbors:

- To the north: residential homes and All That Stuff in the Barn (a local small business)
- To the east: Grand Valley Bank, 7-Eleven Ridley Market, Midway City Park, Goochy-Goo BBQ, Wasatch County Fire & EMS, some residential homes
- To the south: The Corner (restaurant), LA Dresden’s Distinctive Apparel (clothing store), Midway Post Office, Café Galleria Italian (restaurant), Café Galleria Outback Fish and Chips (restaurant)
- To the west: Midway Bakery on Main, residential homes

Distances and travel times between the site and locations of other related functions:

- Homestead Resort (northeast; 1.7 miles; 6 min. drive)
- Zermatt Utah Resort (northeast; 1.5 miles; 5 min. drive)
- Wasatch Mountain State Park (northeast; 2.2 miles; 6 min. drive)
- Soldier Hollow Nordic Center (southwest; 3.8 miles; 9 min. drive)
- Heber City, Utah (east; 3.5 miles; 7 min. drive)
- Charleston Town, Utah (south; 3.5 miles; 7 min. drive)
- Deer Creek Reservoir (south; 5.8 miles; 9 min. drive)
- Jordanelle Reservoir (northeast; 11.4 miles; 19 min. drive)
- Provo, Utah (southwest; 27 miles; 35 min. drive)
- Park City, Utah (north; 17.8 miles; 26 min. drive)
- Salt Lake City, Utah (northwest; 46.1 miles; 49 min. drive)
TOWN HERITAGE EXAMPLE: KINGSBURG, CALIFORNIA

The City of Kingsburg, San Joaquin Valley, is halfway between Los Angeles and Sacramento, California. The city has an area of 3.56 square miles, and was established in 1873 beside a rail stop under the name “Kings River Switch”. During this time, many Swedish immigrants settled this new area. In 1921, the population was around 94% Swedish, and thus the community became known as “Little Sweden”. Their Swedish influence can still be seen in the city, especially in the form of architectural styles. According to US 2010 census, the city has a population of 11,382.

The Swedish presence is wonderfully reflected by the Swedish flags flying from street posts, picturesque murals, and dala horses all over the place. The city arranges Kingsburg Swedish Festival once a year. The streets and school yards fill with people and festive activities. On the other hand, the city has an economic base of agriculture, including grapes, almonds, peaches, raisins and berries.

The city’s significant landmark is the 122-foot-high water tower, erected in 1911. In 1985, the tower was retrofitted as a Swedish coffee pot that has Swedish decorative patterns. The landmark is highly visible from Highway 99, thus becoming an attraction, providing an icon for the city.

The city developed a revitalization strategy for downtown Kingsburg in 2017. Most relevant guidelines found from their plan are: maintaining the “Swedish architectural style,” applying form-based zoning encouraging building forms and site plans to promote pedestrian activity, implementing a new, distinctive and cohesive wayfinding system based on the Swedish Village brand, constructing a gateway arch emphasizing “Downtown Swedish Village”, installing a well-designed map showing the downtown area and local destinations, and last but not least, providing quality eating and drinking locales and unique local shops.

TOWN HERITAGE EXAMPLE: LINDSBORG, KANSAS

Lindsborg is a city in McPherson County, Kansas with an area of 1.69 square mile. According to 2010 census, the city population is 3,458. Lindsborg is known for its Swedish heritage and the biennial Svensk Hyllningsfest. Swedish-related festivals draw crowds of 20,000 each year.

The city is maintaining the heritage of “Dala Horse,” a hand-carved and painted symbol of Swedish handicraft. Throughout the main downtown, they have Dala Horse sculptures either in front of local shops, beside farmlands or the street nodes. In addition, there are also some Swedish sculptures here and there in the downtown. These sculptures express the city’s uniqueness in an eternal way.

The city also planned for its two-block main street to use cobblestone rather than traditional paving in order to give a beautiful, effective representation of their town center. In this way, anyone entering the downtown gets the idea of a special boundary for their exclusive town center. Another point to observe is that the cobblestone pavement works for multipurpose use, either for community gathering, rally, or traffic lanes. The city’s lively local shops uphold their business along these main blocks. The street-side buildings maintain and renovate the historical architectural styles, decors, colors and motifs of the town center, as art is a significant Swedish cultural identity.

General events and activities occurring in the city include the Game of Chess, Swiss dance at Midsummers Festival Svensk Hyllningsfest and Swedish Smörgåsbord. Swedish Smörgåsbord is a Scandinavian feast and the most beloved event for Lindsborg.

The Swedish presence is wonderfully reflected by the Swedish flags flying from street posts, picturesque murals, and dala horses all over the place. The city arranges Kingsburg Swedish Festival once a year. The streets and school yards fill with people and festive activities. On the other hand, the city has an economic base of agriculture, including grapes, almonds, peaches, raisins and berries.

The city’s significant landmark is the 122-foot-high water tower, erected in 1911. In 1985, the tower was retrofitted as a Swedish coffee pot that has Swedish decorative patterns. The landmark is highly visible from Highway 99, thus becoming an attraction, providing an icon for the city.

The city developed a revitalization strategy for downtown Kingsburg in 2017. Most relevant guidelines found from their plan are: maintaining the “Swedish architectural style,” applying form-based zoning encouraging building forms and site plans to promote pedestrian activity, implementing a new, distinctive and cohesive wayfinding system based on the Swedish Village brand, constructing a gateway arch emphasizing “Downtown Swedish Village”, installing a well-designed map showing the downtown area and local destinations, and last but not least, providing quality eating and drinking locales and unique local shops.
Community engagement is fundamental for establishing community’s identity. Town Square can be a center where the community can feel connected to its identity. Therefore, any design elements integrated into the Midway Town Square shall be strongly acknowledged by the community. There is no better way to achieve this goal than by creating different community engagement activities in decision-making process. Community feedback on the opportunities we discuss in this document, will help the Midway Town Square establishing their community identity.

As stated in the Community Vision of Midway General Plan (2017), “The most successful communities are those that have a strong identity and a vision for their future. With a clear vision, public officials and residents can focus on the many small steps that will lead to the future. As decisions are made within the community, each option should be analyzed on whether it corresponds with the community identity and future vision.”

OPPORTUNITY 1: INTEGRATING SWISS CHARACTER

Midway is full of its own unique Swiss architectural styles. It is recommended that the buildings in and around town square integrate, or continue to integrate, those styles to create a more cohesive architectural approach. To achieve this goal, the city may consider following strategies:

• Buildings should be characterized by their steep pitched gable roofs and elegant masonry chimneys. Some roof lines can also feature ornamental carvings and mouldings as found in the historic buildings of Midway.

• Lower stories of a structure should be a display of wood, brick or stone. Upper stories of the buildings can feature stud-frames with a surface of stucco and decorative faux timbers. This style is also popularly known as half-timbering.

• Street-facing facades surrounding the town-square block should utilize the decorative artistic multi-colored motifs that are referenced from exiting historic structures.

• Buildings can integrate porch-like semi-covered entrances as an inviting architectural element at the ground level. Balustrades should also be considered, adding character to balcony-like areas, especially in case of residential houses.

• Ground floors should aim to have high transparency, meaning more glass doors and windows, to attract people. To make the streets more pedestrian-oriented near town square, buildings should treat and re-design their setback space more than just an empty space. Setback space should be utilized with shading structures, seating arrangements, Swiss sculptures, and other landscape features.

• Special Focus should be given to the City Council building. The building should consider the opportunity to integrate faux decorative timber channels and art motifs to revitalize its historic look. This measure does not require breaking any portion of the building, rather provide some retrofitting options. The Town Hall building located just on the east side of it can be a great reference here.

• Special focus should also be concentrated on the restroom building located on the north side of the Town Hall. This is a small building with basic two purposes: restroom and food serving on special occasions like Swiss-day celebration. We believe including some attractive hanging planter boxes and landscape elements surrounding the building will make for a better experience.

We also encourage new developments to follow the other details of architectural guidelines from Midway’s city code section, “Commercial and Resort Architectural Requirements” (city code16.13.37). The following images show classic style of Midway’s Swiss architecture and decorative features.
OPPORTUNITY 2: RECOGNIZING INDIGENOUS CULTURES

Heber Valley was originally discovered by Native Americans. The Timpanogos Utes band was the last to occupy the land. The Town Square represents an opportunity to recognize this group, and any other indigenous groups, that have occupied land of present-day Midway in the form of land acknowledgment. Possible placement locations include on or inside of Town Hall, and the open space behind Town Hall.

Additional Resources
- Collaborate directly with the Ute Tribe.
- A guide to indigenous land and territorial acknowledgments.
- Another guide to land acknowledgment, including tips for creating an indigenous land acknowledgment statement.
- A Native lands map to help identify tribes to acknowledge.

Figure 7. Land acknowledgment monument, Texas Christian University
Figure 8. Land acknowledgment plaque, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Figure 9. Land acknowledgment mural, Seattle Mennonite Church

OPPORTUNITY 3: SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTISTS

Midway Town Square has a great potential to invite and engage local artists while building different elements for the Town Square. For instance, artists can construct decorative architectural features and wooden landscape elements very easily. Moreover, with such collaboration, local artists will feel involved with their community development and gain a sense of ownership. On top of this, the citizens will get a chance of knowing their local artists who do these artworks.

The city can also incentive local singers to participate and encourage them to organize their live music shows at different times of the year. Some other ways of supporting local artists can be inviting to sell their works for a limited time so all artists have opportunities for public displays, arranging an annual or semi-annual outdoor display, and publicizing their works through social media.

Additional Resources:
- A maintenance best practices plan for public art by the Artwork Archive.
- The Best Practice: Commissioning Art in Public Spaces by the National Association for the Visual Arts.
- Places of Possibility Public ART & Placemaking Toolkit

Figure 10. Consider functional art: ‘Please Be Seated’, London
Figure 11. Consider Swiss-inspired art: ‘Alphorn’, by C&C Studio
Figure 12. Consider murals: ‘Wild City’, Park City
Figure 13. Consider live performances: Live local music, Danehy Park, City of Cambridge.
OPPORTUNITY 4: REUSING EXISTING BUILDINGS AND SPACES

Adaptive reuse of existing buildings would be an effective way to encourage developments while preserving historic character and local sense of place. It can be a strong tool to tell the stories of the community. Re-purposing old buildings will also bring significant economic benefits.

For instance, an older building in Midway’s town center was converted into the Midway Mercantile Restaurant, preserving its historic look while updating to a new use. Older buildings can become places for local offices, coffee shops, craft-shops, bakery shops, art-centers or even community libraries. An older residential building can also serve all these multi-use purposes. Such adaptive reuse of buildings can be the new centerpieces of a neighborhood, while upholding the experience of place and celebrating what makes a community special. Reuse also aids in achieving the Midway General Plan’s guideline to, “continue to promote historic preservation to identify and work towards preservation of historic buildings, lands, and atmosphere.”

Midway’s Mercantile Restaurant has already set up a successful example of reusing existing buildings. This historic building has adapted its use from being a local grocery shop to an attractive restaurant with apartment features on the second floor. It’s recommended Midway to follow such steps to conserve its local identity.

Figure 14: Midway Mercantile Restaurant, Midway

OPPORTUNITY 5: CREATING INCLUSIVE SPACES

If planned properly, the Midway Town square can turn into a vibrant inclusive space for people of all ages, abilities and demographics. Any well-designed square shall facilitate diverse activities for children, women, men, young adults, seniors and for differently abled people. However, achieving this aim may involve some obstacles. Yet, if community workshops are arranged to bring together all stakeholders and representatives of previously mentioned groups, most obstacles can be avoided.

Examples of inclusive spaces we recommend include accessible ramps, landscape elements catering to adults, children, differently abled, and seniors, and ensuring sufficient lighting for the safety of women, especially at night. Once all users are involved in the decision-making process of a place—and the process respects their choices and priorities—the place will become a platform with shared vision: an inclusive and livable Town Square.

Washington Canal Park, Washington DC and Campus Martius, Detroit MI are two great examples of public squares that have been successful in creating an inclusive space.

Figure 15: Washington Canal Park, Washington DC

Figure 16: Campus Martius, Detroit
The Midway General Plan declares that a mix of land uses and activities is a critical element to the community vision (pg. 1314). This involves providing a range of complementary land uses that are located together in a balanced mix, including residential development, shops, employment, community and recreation facilities, and parks and open space. This diversity makes communities more interesting and inclusive, providing residents of all backgrounds the chance to participate in something they enjoy. It also enables their needs to be satisfied locally, preventing tax revenue from leaving the City. Research shows that a variety of land uses can also influence a neighborhood’s walkability. A walkable city provides increased opportunities for social interaction which in turn leads to greater social capital and community cohesion. Furthermore, having a range of activities diversifies the City’s tax base. A City’s financial stability should never become dependent upon one sector of the economy. By providing a mix of equitable and engaging activities, Midway residents will experience a deeper sense of belonging and an increase in quality of life and well-being.

**OPPORTUNITY 1: BROADENING DINING OPTIONS**

Switzerland’s culture has been heavily influenced by its neighboring countries of France, Germany, and Italy. This factor has played a significant role in the development of the country’s delicious cuisine. Among other things, the country is celebrated for its chocolate, cheese, and pastries. Few Swiss cuisines are currently represented in Midway. Herein lies a fantastic opportunity to feature one of the greatest elements of Swiss culture—its cuisine. The City should work with the commercial food and dining sector to attract and incentivize restaurants that feature German, French, Italian, and Romansch cuisine. The City should also aim to welcome themed eateries such as a Chocolaterie (chocolate shop), a Fromagerie (cheese shop), a Patisserie (an Italian/French bakery that specializes in pastries and sweets), and other Swiss-style dining options. Moreover, the City should strive to welcome a Cave à Vins (wine shop) or tavern that specializes in serving wine. These could all be located along the Main Street corridor or within the Town Square. Buildings within the Town Square (e.g. City Hall) could be attractively retrofitted to house one or more dining establishments. Having these businesses in the heart of Midway would yield a more complete Swiss cultural experience and add to the Bavarian character and ambiance of the City.

On a different note, food trucks have also been identified as a useful strategy for broadening dining options within the City. They require a low initial investment and involve a relatively low operation cost. Best of all, they attract a lot of people! Food trucks can greatly help to increase public activity within the Town Square and other essential areas. While it is important that food trucks don’t overshadow local businesses and restaurants, food trucks have been known to draw substantial amounts of people to a location. This aspect of triangulation offers a chance for the City and its residents to make a profit. Providing a place for food trucks to congregate each month will activate areas of the square that would otherwise remain vacant.

**OPPORTUNITY 2: INTEGRATING CREATIVE LIGHTING**

Midway can increase public activity on the Town Square block through the inclusion of unique and interesting lighting. Lighting often determines how approachable a place feels to people walking by at night or in the evenings. Providing people with a fun and unique lighting experience can help improve their sense of safety and their desire to linger and participate in evening activities on the block.

One option that could potentially be included is a ‘light sculpture,’ which can project words or designs onto the surfaces around them.

**OPPORTUNITY 3: INCORPORATING SCULPTURE GARDENS**

A sculpture garden is an outdoor space with the intended purpose of presenting typically permanent and durable sculptures with landscaped surroundings. The benefit of adding unique sculptures and sculpture gardens to a location like Midway’s Town Square is they can take up whatever amount of land the community wishes it to occupy. There can also be several small installations throughout the block, making it a great opportunity to engage with local artists and the community on the sculptures’ design and placement on the block.
The integration of nature into towns and cities has a special benefit of achieving better emotional and physical health. Midway Town Square, with its beautiful rural natural setting, can take the advantage of this fact. Designers and planners should take care of the existing natural elements, while any additional landscape elements should be considered to enhance this natural beauty. Trees and vegetable buffer noise offer shade, reduce the effect of airborne pollutants. Studies also find that access to nature lowers mortality, illness, higher outdoor activities, relieves stress. With all these prospects, the square with accessibility to nature, can become a factor of greater social capital.

Another opportunity the city should consider is to further integrate connections to the trail system. By expanding the system and further connecting to other parts of the area, town square can be a central intersection for residents and visitors seeking recreational activities in nature.

Beautification increases the aesthetic visual quality of a town. Beautifying elements welcome visitors and also enhance the quality of life for the town residents. Landscape design is one of the successful ways to create beauty in an open space. Beautification of a town square can help establish a memorable image, especially for a small town. Visitors can refer to that image and may want to visit again.

On possibility is that Midway could develop their own Community Beautification Program for the square. Through such programs, there is the possibility to offer new jobs for the community members and local business owners. For examples: Local gardeners and persons with native plant knowledge can get the opportunity to be involved. Roles of volunteers and partnerships among local organizations can evolve. We believe this can be another potential way to involve community members. Such programs can also act as a foundation for building friendships. When they will be performing these beautification responsibilities together, they will develop deep ties with the Town Square.

A wonderful reference of the beautification program is “Beautification, Signage, And Public Art Strategic Plan” of Tompkin County, New York.

Landmarks are those structures which create, preserve or celebrate an identity, symbol, or remembrance of any place. It can be any historic structure, a sculpture, a fountain, a monument tower, or even a year-old tree. Most of the successful town squares can be identified with a significant landmark. For instance, the Utah State Capitol, the water feature of City Creek Mall in Salt Lake City, Sugar House Pioneer Monument in Salt Lake City, Trevi Fountain in Rome, and so on.

The city of Midway can also consider having a significant landmark in their town square. The existing gazebo is already a great option. However, it needs better visual connection, especially from the surrounding streets. Without the establishment of better visual connection, it becomes hidden. Furthermore, the gazebo needs to be more accessible. Some defined pedestrian pathways can be integrated. These will create an inviting feeling to the people to go directly towards the gazebo. The town can also explore adding one more option such as creating a water fountain or a sculpture that represents local Swiss identity. Whatever option is explored, we need to ensure that the scale of the structure shall be consistent and proportionate with the scale of Midway town.
OPPORTUNITY 4: PROVIDING FLEXIBLE ACTIVITIES

To make a public space active and vibrant, different activity spaces should be provided for people of all ages and abilities. Having flexible activities near and within Midway Town Square will bring in more residents, while making the square lively all day long. The square should also add such activity features that would make people stay there for a significant period of time. There can be multiple options to explore such as having a fire-pit, a splash-pad, some on-site sports and fitness elements, small paved plazas, or low freestanding walls for seating. However, designers shall keep in mind that the overall consistency of scale with respect to Midway town is ensured. These following images will give ideas about how different places had implemented these options:

- Figure 4. Splash pad, Wilson Park, Torrance, California
- Figure 5. Town Plaza, Los Gatos, California
- Figure 6. Flex outdoor seating
- Figure 7. Fire pit design

OPPORTUNITY 5: INTEGRATING NATIVE VEGETATION

Landscape design that revolves around protecting nature drives people toward building a positive relationship with local species. As many towns tend to grow in an urbanizing pattern, there is a high chance that residents would lose those relationships and knowledge. Successful landscape design brings back wildlife into the town and re-establishes connections with local biodiversity. There is even research which proves that if any site is rich with local plant-life and biodiversity, residents living around that site are found to be more emotionally positive and happier. Therefore, Midway-town square should have preference for local plant species at the site of town square to promote relationships with local species.

- Figure 8. Utah State Botanical Center, Kaysville, Utah
- Figure 9. Landscape design with native plants by DTLA, Backyard of a residence, Oakland
OPPORTUNITY 6: MAINTAINING NATURE’S FUNCTIONS

Green infrastructure (GI) is an effective approach of maintaining nature’s function. Such infrastructures can protect, restore, or just mimic the natural water cycle. It incorporates both natural and engineering methods to infiltrate water runoff, to manage flood water, to conserve ecosystem values and to perform other on-site water functions. Green infrastructures may include a wide array of types, such as with the design of retention ponds, detention ponds, bioswales, and rain gardens. The type shall be selected carefully based on desired function and experts’ knowledge. However, all types of green infrastructures provide multiple benefits to people and wildlife.

We find a great opportunity to integrate a green infrastructure in the west side of the Town Square. Currently there is a linear water channel running. It is constructed as a small-scale dam for the purpose of water management. The downsides of constructing a dam is that it forcefully breaks the natural water cycle and can bring ecological harm. Therefore, we believe designing green infrastructure there will not only restore ecological restoration of soil and water, but would also bring back the natural beauty of the place.

To attain this goal, coordinating with professionals who design, plan and execute such green infrastructure would be necessary for the city of Midway. Here is a conceptual image showing the possible integration of green infrastructure:

Figure 10. Existing condition
Figure 11. Visualization after integrating green infrastructure

OPPORTUNITY 7: CONSERVING A RURAL APPEARANCE

Like every rural town, Midway has its unique rural look. With proper landscape design, Midway’s Town Square can set an example of how to conserve a rural ambiance. One successful way to achieve this goal is to select materials carefully. Use of local materials or materials that can be treated with rural-rustic texture should be considered at the very first step. In general, brick, wood or stone can reflect a rural look.

However, rural appearance also depends on the layout patterns of materials that can change the whole look of a built environment. In the case of seating, low height walls, or pavements that are constructed, we recommend to follow the historic layout patterns of the materials. The way one layout is done can influence the rural appearance, so careful decisions are necessary here. Planners can research Midway’s historic material patterns, select particular patterns from the research output and then communicate with the constructors before building.

Another way to protect rural ambiance would be to including local plants with in-built landscape elements. Local plant species help to preserve a significant degree of ruralscape.

Figure 12. Wooden frames with rustic look and native planting
Figure 13. Stone pavement layout
Figure 14. Low height retaining stone wall
Midway’s General Plan set the goal of developing a balanced circulation system for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians (Transportation, Goal 1). The General Plan also seeks to provide transportation infrastructure that meets the needs for all types of users, making it important that the transportation infrastructure is welcoming to more than just vehicular use (Transportation, Goal 2). This allows Midway to achieve its goal of improving accessibility (Transportation, Goal 4), while preparing for future developments of land in and around the central business district. Since Midway’s Town Square acts as the center of the community, it is important that its design is both a reflection of the current mobility needs for the community, as well as the needs of residents and visitors into the future. The improvement of parking and circulation, the addition of alternative transportation options, and the improvement of wayfinding in the Town Square will help Midway achieve these objectives stated in their General Plan, while also providing a more complete and unified transportation system for people of all ages and abilities.

**OPPORTUNITY 1: USING ALTERNATIVE PARKING STRATEGIES**

Surrounding the square are 103 parking spaces, including 3 handicapped parking spaces. This is not including the couple dozen spaces located in the north-access park lot located inside the square. Parking should be assessed to determine if these many spots are needed. If parking is never full outside of infrequent, major events, reductions and re-use of the space should be considered. A couple of options for better activating space currently used as parking are provided below.

The street parking located on the north side of the square would be the most ideal location for reducing parking. This would open up space for a pedestrian sidewalk or an extension of the shared-use path currently on the west side of the square along W 100 N. Obstacles for this include the capital expenses of extending the curb and installing the sidewalk or multi-use path.

Currently, there is a bike lane on Main Street in front of Town Square. One possibility for activating the space is to move the bike lane between the on-street parking and the sidewalk. Doing this would require changing the angled parking to parallel parking, allowing for the extra space needed. Safety of cyclist from vehicles backing out of their spaces would also improve and would better connect cyclists on Main St to the shared use path on N 200 W. Since Main Street is a state road, this strategy would require intense coordination with Utah Department of Transportation, a possible obstacle.

**OPPORTUNITY 2: IMPLEMENTING A SHUTTLE SERVICE**

In 2019, a study looking into the possibility of developing a shuttle that would connect Park City, Heber, and Midway was proposed. A shuttle system like that would not only help connect major locations in Midway, such as the Town Square and the resorts, but also allow residents and visitors to more easily access Midway from the rest of Wasatch and Summit Counties. Midway could benefit from developing a shuttle service, as it could help encourage and provide easy transportation for visitors that are staying at local resorts to spend more time at Midway’s Town Square and on Main Street.

**OPPORTUNITY 3: WAYFINDING**

Wayfinding often combines a location’s signs, maps, landmarks, colors, and designs in order to provide an enjoyable, efficient, easy, and positive experience for visitors.

Create an Identity
Midway has already been developing its own style of signage and wayfinding over the years, intertwining its Swiss heritage and the mountain rustic style that is common in the area. Going forward, Midway should take this unique style and try to apply it to its wayfinding across the community.

Town Square Entry
Something that could be useful to mark the entries to the Midway Town Square block is archways at the major pedestrian paths leading into the square. One example of such an arch is the Central Park entry archway design in Owatonna, Minnesota, which acts as both a clear entry into the park while also creating an interesting and enticing design. This type of arch can be simple, but an effective means of providing clear entries that help to cultivate a unique identity, making the entry into a space fun and exciting, and improve the visibility of entrances and exists to the space.

Building something similar in Midway, particularly at the mid-block entry on Main Street between the Town Hall and the Community Center, could help encourage more people to visit and spend their time in the Town Square. The arch’s design should draw from the same Swiss and mountain rustic styles that Midway has been cultivating, allowing it to best represent the Midway community.

Figure 2. Midway City sign
Figure 3. Hamlet Park, Midway
Figure 4. Visualization of an entry archway to Town Square, Midway
Midway’s General Plan (2017) states that the vision of economic development is to “make Midway a sustainable economic base by retaining, recruiting and encouraging businesses that expand the retail tax base, provide jobs, attract tourism, and retain and enhance the quality of life, and are consistent with the Swiss/European identity of Midway.”

Central to achieving this vision would be to invigorate Town Square and model an implementation of economic activities that is set to grow and adapt with the rest of the city. Many cities are scrambling to look for ideas on how to attract more business in their town. While that may seem like a noble goal, outcomes of attracting business to the town may not be as beneficial to the local economy as a “home grown” business. The American Independent Business Alliance published several studies that tested this theory. The results indicate that home grown businesses benefit the local economy more, by far, compared to a national business. With this in mind, there are several actionable items for the city of Midway to consider as they look for ways to give Main Street more life, starting with the Town Square.

**OPPORTUNITY 1: CREATING A BUSINESS INCUBATOR**

A good way to tap into that natural talent is by setting up a business incubator to spring up entrepreneurship in the city. The center can operate like a one-stop-shop where new entrepreneurs can visit the office and learn more about how to get started with their business idea.

The business incubator could provide information about business training, loans, and available grants for startups or small businesses. The center can also provide mentoring services and basic computer skills to help business owners succeed in this new era of business technology.

In Midway, there is an opportunity for this incubator to be located in the Town Square. People of all ages are curious and passionate about doing things. A business support center could encourage many men, women, and youth to turn to their natural talents, passions, and life experiences into business opportunities that might have seemed impossible before.

The business incubator can focus on supporting both startup and existing businesses. The idea is not only to get businesses started, but also to support existing businesses and speed up their growth as well.

This opportunity also gives the city a chance to engage the community. The city should consider collaborating with existing local business organizations such as the Midway Business Alliance, Midway Boosters, and other groups of interest such as the Farmers market group, or the Midway Art Association. Doing this would be a unique opportunity for the city to create community engagement for the development of the city.

The city should also look into their community to find individuals who may be excited to support this effort. For example, from the retired community the city may be able to find people with relevant expertise who are enthusiastic and available to teach, advise and give guidance at the business incubator.

The city can create a program to recognize these individuals who are willing to make a difference in their community. In exchange for their service the city can use the Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-Off Abatement Program or any other incentives deemed appropriate by the city.

**OPPORTUNITY 2: PROVIDING COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR START-UPS**

The city can engage existing business owners on Main Street, and around Town Square, by providing commercial space for start-ups. This program would be to donate extra business space that can be used for another business, with the idea of complimenting the first, existing business. The city program can subsidize the donated space and offer it to qualified businesses.

For example, a gas station business may invite a drive through coffee shop if they have extra space for small fees, receiving a subsidy from the city program.
OPPORTUNITY 3: CREATING A MOBILE BUSINESS PARK

There are many business opportunities that can start using mobile utilities. The city could come up with a program in the summer where new businesses have the opportunity to run on weekends at the Town Square. Not only is this good for nurturing small businesses, but it is also good for the traffic at the Town Square. There are a few examples of such businesses where a mobile utility seems appropriate to start up with, including food trucks, mobile flower ships, mobile pet groomers.

Figure 3. Mobile flower shop
Figure 4. Mobile ice cream shop

OPPORTUNITY 4: STAYING CONNECTED

The city should lead the effort of marketing the city effectively. In order to attract more people to visit the city, or encourage locals to spend more time at the Town Square, the city should clearly share and articulate activities and events that are happening in Town Square and in the city in general. One of the ways to accomplish this task is by using the city website.

City Website

Review the current website and see if it is accomplishing the following goals:
- Inform and engage the local community
- Inform and engage visitors or tourists about the city and it’s whereabouts
- Connect locals to other important states and federal services

A review of the current website will provide feedback about whether the site is meeting the top three goals and whether or not it is designed by following best practices to provide optimal performance and engagement to the community. The following metrics can be used to testing website performance and engagement:
- Usability
- Content
- Accessibility
- Speed
- Functionality
- Security

Figure 5. Midway City Website

Social Media

Reviewing social media engagement and performance. Effectively using social media is key for building a strong online presence and growing a following. The city has the opportunity to be more connected with the community and well wishers of the city from a distance. There are many social media platforms that the city can choose to use, but the following are the most commonly used.
- Facebook
- Youtube
- Instagram
- Twitter

This is an opportunity for the city to regularly conduct social media analysis and determine what is working and what is not. Such assessments can be done by reviewing the following categories and their metrics:
- Content: number of link posts, video posts, image posts, text-based posts
- Engagement: number of individual engagements by type such as retweets or comments, engagement rate % increase/decrease, mentions received, direct messages received
- Timing: number of posts/week, most common posting time, number of timely/seasonal posts, most engaged audience time.
- Audience: total followers, new followers, % male, % female, primary age group, primary location
- Listening: number of mentions, number of positive, negative and neutral sentiments, primary mentioners
- Traffic: total sessions, total page views, bounce rate, pages viewed per session, average session duration, mobile vs. desktop traffic, most common links
- Branding: terminology to avoid, mission statement for branding, visual marketing guidelines, public relations policies, basic do’s and don’ts
- Social Media Management: who manages the social media, how many people have access, who is in charge of collecting analytics, average response time to post engagement, average response time to direct messages, PR issues and management

An in depth review of social media performance should be able to guide exactly on the city should to get positive results from such engagement.

Creating a City Brand

Many cities recognize how critical it is to have a brand image. However, creating a recognized brand takes a lot of effort—more than some cities are willing to invest. A true brand is not what you say you are, rather it is what other people think of you.

Elements of brand identity include visual symbols, culture, the mission statement, slogans, and values.

The opportunity for the city in this case is to review Midway’s brand identity and see if the brand performs as expected, or else find ways to give a voice to the brand.
WEBSITE REVIEW

Overall Performance Review by WooRank

midwaycityut.org
April 11, 2020 9:15 PM

- Passed
- To improve
- Errors

The test review was done using the following tools: Google Test Tools and WooRank. A more thorough review may be required to get better feedback on how the website is performing.
“The most successful communities are those that have a strong identity and a vision for their future.” These simple words from the Midway City General Plan possess profound meaning. Anyone who has had the pleasure of visiting Midway knows that it is a unique and wonderful place with delightful people, a stunning landscape, and a fascinating culture. It is a place to belong, a place to call home. This document has sought to embody this notion and to advance the City’s remarkable aspirations with regards to community building.

The process of compiling this report has been ambitious and thought-provoking. The report delivers fundamental and specific information pertaining to the City’s identity, values, sense of place, and economic resiliency. It has captured a potential and exciting future for some of the City’s essential and most meaningful places, most notably, the Town Square. The Town Square and surrounding areas must come to play a greater role in the City’s future. The opportunities identified in this report are meant to be relatively low-cost, achievable steps in realizing this future of Town Square as an active place for the community. This document also clarifies and expresses the enormous potential this space has to become a cornerstone and fundamental element for Midway and the surrounding region.

Remember, a vision without action is just a dream. Moving forward, everything depends upon execution. As City officials, developers, residents, and other stakeholders observe the principles herein—which have purposefully been scripted as a creative starting point—Midway’s downtown will become a more socially, economically, and environmentally thriving area attracting people from across the region and beyond. Furthermore, it will serve as an example to other municipalities hoping to show forth their greatest qualities and reach their highest potential.

Our sincere gratitude to all who provided their time and insights during the process of creating this report.

Mayor Celeste Johnson
Michael Henke, Midway City Planner
Joe Klotovich, Midway Booster President
Sydney Holmes, Zermatt Resort Marketing Manager
Stacy Lindsey, Zermatt Resort Revenue Manager
Bruce Parker, AICP, Course Instructor, Small Town and Resort Community Planning
University of Utah, Master of City and Metropolitan Planning program
University of Utah, Master of Real Estate Development program
**Sources**

**History**

**Site Opportunities, Mobility**
End of document.