

The Educational and Cultural Potential of the North Logan City Center Needs to be Considered

The emerging reality and exciting vision for the future that is the North Logan City Center holds the promise of valuable benefits for the entire community, ranging from investment of private capital expected to exceed \$200 million, to new property tax and sales tax revenues that will fund City services, to the creation of jobs and small business opportunities. These are just a few of the types of economic and fiscal impacts that will be generated. Funds for new roads and infrastructure, school facilities, parks and recreation facilities also stand to accrue at significant levels.

There are other, perhaps even more important benefits that can be generated beyond those framed in the context of hard dollars and cents. These are opportunities for cultural, civic, and other activities that are not just financially based. These and other quality-of-life benefits will be available to all residents of Cache Valley when the North Logan City Center is completed.

Specifically to the point of this letter, there are educational and cultural possibilities waiting to be cultivated by academic institutions, the arts community, historic interests, corporate neighbors and others seeking to enrich the Valley through this far-reaching project. What may you ask are these possibilities? Is not this simply a scheme to enrich developers, divert tax revenues, and court growth where a community with rural character is the desired status quo? Well here are some ideas to think about as key decisions are mulled that will shape the future of the Valley for generations to come.

The master plan for the City Center, and its core North Logan Village area, calls for the development of a Village Green typical of other rural communities that can play host to visual arts and music festivals, performances by local and regional groups and artists, and feature sculpture, fountains, landscaping and other amenities designed to delight the senses and enrich the mind. Simply as a gathering place for the community, the Village Green becomes a crossroads for the exchange of ideas and social interaction. The paved pedestrian walkways, seating areas, and park amenities will be designed to foster this environment. There is no single place in Cache Valley that serves this function today – especially of the size, form and function envisioned here.

Cache Valley's strength in science, technology and the environment will be featured in the buildings themselves, designed to use renewable energy and resources in both their construction and operation. The City Center becomes a living laboratory for students that are in-tune with their imperiled planet and the role they themselves will play in its health. There has been discussion of a privately-financed science center being incorporated nearby to the City Center. An IMAX theater has also been discussed. Alternatively, small pocket museums can feature science and technology exhibits, while art and history are featured nearby. State-of-the art first-run entertainment theaters could play their cultural role as well.

The City Center can become both a showcase and a gathering place for Utah State University and its manifold connections throughout the world. How shall we highlight the aerospace brain-trust that resides in our community? How shall we garner the international acclaim for the special place that is being created? Not to be forgotten is the Valley's strong medical community. Agriculture and business also have their key place in the dialogue of the future. The planned Cache Valley Conference Center and Hilton Hotel will provide the physical space and associated amenities to facilitate achievement of these and other worthy goals.

As a new facility in the Valley that can host conferences, seminars, meetings, and continuing education functions, the Center will play a very direct role in adult education. Its introduction will also help in creating a critical mass of conference and special event facilities that will include the Eccles Center, the planed Riverwoods project with its events center, and smaller places and spaces located throughout the community. Making Cache Valley a conference and event destination will have its impact on tourism and visitation from afar – contributing yet again to the cultural exposure and education-rich environment on which the community thrives.

The rich history of Cache Valley can be expressed and interpreted through commemorative plaques and markers, statues, and other elements of the built environment that will stand the test of time and be present to teach future generations and visitors about what has come before. The bright future of the Valley will be expressed through the development of a vibrant place to live, work, and play that can also offer these and other educational and cultural opportunities. This is the City Center and its social and civic heart – the North Logan Village. I urge the Cache County School Board and the Cache County Council to join with North Logan City in creating a future we can all be proud of by reinvesting a portion of resources that the project itself will create.