Two World Wars and the Great Depression took their toll on the area, but they do not compare to what was to come next: suburbanization and the freeway.
a slice of life
300 South in 1950

The city directories tell us the names and occupations of the residents of blocks 46 and 63, providing a glimpse of the community fabric woven by their lives. They were diverse and working-class; many were employed in nearby industries. Several would remain in the same houses for over thirty years.

NORTH SIDE of 300 SOUTH
546 Mr. Romo, laborer for the railroad
550 Mrs. Chumley, widow
552 The Rev. Jennings, Mt. Zion Church of God in Christ (non-denominational)
558 Mr. Rocha, bartender
560 Mr. Garcia
564 Bruno Chavez, laborer
566 Mr. Martinez

SOUTH SIDE of 300 SOUTH
519 John Mayo, employee of the Porter Macaroni Company
523 Mrs. Hendrickson, widow
527 Silvio Mayo, spreader for the Porter Macaroni Company
529 Dominic Putrey, helper at the Holy Cross Hospital

1 Railroad Club Place, a bar
2 City directories show a Mr. Kattar living here from the early 1930s to the late 1960s, perhaps a relation to George Katter, the Lebanese labor agent who helped create Little Syria on 300 South 500 West.
3 These car and bus facilities are evidence of the transition away from rail transportation.
4 Mt. Zion Church of God in Christ (non-denominational)
5 Cheap housing sometimes meant substandard living conditions. A Mr. Perry lived here for at least ten years, feet away from a poultry processing plant.

ABOVE
The Utah Transit Authority was formed in the early 1970s to try to revive public transit, in decline since the end of the trolleys. By and large, however, automobiles were the way people got around, fueled by service stations like this.

LEFT
A car involved in a collision with a fire truck on 300 South and 200 West.
After 1950, the Hub district began a long decline into its present state of near abandonment. The main factors influencing this decline were the end of rail as a major form of passenger travel, the construction of Interstate 15 two blocks to the west, and the nationwide flight to the suburbs that drained most downtowns of their residents.

The Polk City Directories help document this decline. Analyzing the type and number of businesses and residents listed in the reverse directory section opens up a view into the economic and social character of the area. In 1955, the streets surrounding blocks 46 and 63 (500 West, 600 West, 200 South, 300 South, 400 South, and Rio Grande Avenue) listed 28 residences. By 1975, this number was down to 13, and by 1995, only four people lived in the entire two-block area. Commercial use (restaurants, bars, etc.) also plummeted, from 18 listings in 1955 to just three in 1995. Industrial listings (factories, warehouses, etc.) fared somewhat better: in 1955 there were 32 listings, which only decreased to 21 by 1995. The neighborhood was thus transformed from an area hosting a large number and variety of uses into a sparsely-used and homogenous industrial zone.

A major factor causing this transformation was the end of passenger rail travel. In 1977, the Rio Grande Depot was sold to the Utah State Historical Society and largely abandoned for rail uses (Utah Historical Society, n.d.). The electric trolley car system that served the area stopped running in 1941 (McCormick, 2000). The major impetus and means for going to the depot were thus both removed. The saloons, hotels, and cafés that relied on the pedestrian traffic formerly generated by the depot began to disappear. The railroads also now required fewer workers, contributing to the decline in nearby residential populations. With the end of rail travel, the depot switched from being a hub and center of transportation for the community to being a dead-end industrial district sandwiched between the undesirable relics of the old order—the railroad tracks—and the equally undesirable emblem of the new—the freeway.

The freeway, built two blocks to the west in the 1960’s, turned the area into a no-man’s land. An area already hindered by the noise and dirt of the railway now had a large and loud freeway to confront. With east-west travel blocked or detoured by this massive barrier, there remained little or no reason for traveling through the area. Instead, the flow of traffic, now almost totally vehicular, was swept up by the on-ramps north and south of the area and onto the freeway, to be taken miles away to the newly-blossoming suburbs.

The growth of these suburbs was a major contributor to the area’s loss of residents. In 1950, Salt Lake City was home to 7 out of 10 residents in Salt Lake County. By 1990, the city’s population had...
declined slightly, but the rest of the valley had grown enormously. Salt Lake City was now home to only 2 out of 10 of county residents (McCormick, 2000). As residents left downtown, it was natural that one of the first areas to be abandoned would be a run-down factory neighborhood such as that found on 300 South. At the same time, the growth of shopping malls eliminated Salt Lake City’s function as the only, or even the primary, commercial center in the area, no doubt contributing to the decline of the former commercial district along 200 South. In order to survive, the street became a mini “red-light” district, home to numerous bars, taverns, and other pleasures unavailable in the suburbs. This lasted until the early 1980s, when these uses, too, were abandoned.

In 1990, 300 South between 500 and 600 West would have been unrecognizable to anyone who had resided there in 1950. The empty street with cracking pavement surrounded by weed fields, abandoned homes, and parking lots looked nothing like it would have when it was home to 10 residents, two factories, a church, and a steady stream of rail passenger traffic. The era of the railroad and the downtown had ended, and this block was among the victims of that change.
“Give me your tired, your poor, • Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, • The wretched refuse

As the latest immigrants, the Hispanics were often shoved to the bottom of the economic ladder. In one interview, John Florez summarized his experiences: “People who talk about the ‘good old days’ do so because they didn’t have to live it.” He recalled that his father, Reyes Florez, came to Utah after World War I to work for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. The senior Florez managed to hold on to his job during the Depression, but family members needed to supplement his salary by working the beet fields during the summer and early fall. The family lived on Salt Lake’s westside in a boxcar divided into kitchen and living areas. The “house was only twenty feet from the tracks” (McCormick, 2000).
of your teeming shore. • Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, • I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

A large Scandinavian population supported many local Nordic newspapers. They worked mainly in the mines or on the railroad and in factories such as the Jensen Creamery.

This 1891 Rio Grande railway schedule was printed in German in the Beobachter, a newspaper which served the still-small yet growing German population, most having come as the result of LDS missionary work.

The Bikuben, Danish for “beehive,” was a newspaper and a bank created to facilitate payments to those wishing to travel “with the Latter-Day Saint emigration” from Scandinavia.

and many others
death is a new beginning

The decline that began in the 1950s had peaked by the mid-1980s. Many lots were vacant and the only remaining houses would soon be torn down. However, in the mid 1990s the city began plans to revitalize the district. Several plans were formulated and steering committees formed to create an urban neighborhood with a broad range of land uses and residents. These plans supported the creation of dense residential development as a way to bring the district back to life. Attention was given to transportation connections and the possibility of “transit-oriented development.” Some plans suggested splitting up the blocks to create a series of smaller, human-scale streets that would more easily facilitate the growth of neighborhoods.

The Rio Grande Depot still facilitated rail traffic. Most of this was freight, though limited Amtrak service continued at the depot until the lines were removed to create a park. Although there was little physical activity within this specific area, the larger Gateway District received significant attention. The Gateway, a mixed-use development, was created one block north and east of the Hub area. The popularity of the Gateway as a place to shop and live has added a sense of vitality and hope to the entire depot area. Instrumental to this revived sense of hope are two land use plans—The Gateway Specific Plan, and Creating an Urban Neighborhood: Gateway District Land Use & Development Master Plan.
The Gateway Specific Plan

The Guiding Principles
The Gateway Specific Plan provides objectives, policies, and urban design ideas that will guide land use decisions well into the next century. The plan envisions a transition of land uses from the current service-oriented commercial and industrial uses to a mixed-use district. To implement this vision, ten guiding principles were developed in the course of the planning process.

- Create a positive and clear identity for Salt Lake City and the Gateway District.
- Create a sense of place for the District that celebrates and supports neighborhoods, each with a distinct character and personality.
- Create a hierarchy of streets and open spaces that provide a structure and framework for the development of neighborhoods.
- Encourage diversity in jobs, residents, and visitors to balance neighborhood needs, and create a vital street life and a thriving local economy.
- Encourage excellence in design of public infrastructure opportunities such as the I-15 reconstruction, public transportation systems, and streetscapes that are elegant and fitting of a Gateway.
- Look to traditional patterns of development in Salt Lake City as examples of the kind of blocks and streets that encourage and support urban neighborhood development.
- Maintain, enhance, and create connections to neighborhoods surrounding the Gateway District, neighborhoods within the Gateway District, and downtown Salt Lake City.
- Maintain and encourage diversity through retention of existing businesses and residents, retention of existing structures and uses, development of a broad range of housing types that fit into virtually every area of Gateway, and through integration of social service providers and their clients into the fabric of the community.
- Require excellence in design through urban design guidelines that preserve views and vistas, create pedestrian-friendly and attractive streets, establish a distinct character, and create landmarks and signature structures in architecture and infrastructure.
- Leave an Olympic Legacy in the design of important infrastructure elements like the 400 South Street Bridge and the new viaducts; establish an address street with distinction in the area; and create a public open space system that brings City Creek back to the surface and integrates it into the neighborhood (Salt Lake City, 1998).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhower signs the Federal Aid Highway Act, establishing the Interstate system which would radically change the character of Salt Lake City, especially its west side.</td>
<td>Salt Lake City’s annual bus ridership is 12 million, a 61% drop from 1946.</td>
<td>Crossroads Urban Center founded to serve Salt Lake’s poor and low-income residents.</td>
<td>Salt Palace dedicated; the construction of this $16.7 million complex helped revitalize a rapidly decaying downtown but eradicated most of a historic Japanese district.</td>
<td>Salt Lake City’s population peaks at 189,454.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating an Urban Neighborhood: Gateway District Land Use & Development Master Plan

The Rio Grande Depot provides the focus of this neighborhood. The depot should be protected so that it remains an integral and active piece of the emerging pattern of development.

With the transition of the California Tire and Rubber Company building to residential use, the trend for residential reuse of existing historic buildings continues following the example of ArtSpace and other housing developments in the area. Housing will be varied and accommodate all incomes. The mix of uses found in each reuse development provides for a variety of housing types combined with retail commercial uses such as shops, restaurants, day care, galleries, and studios. New development will complement a rich inventory of unique and historic buildings. Established patterns of scale and character will be enhanced and protected as a finer grain of streets, blocks and buildings emerges. New development should provide community services needed by residents of the area. The potential development of an intermodal station along 600 West and 200 South would provide an opportunity for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in which community needs and services are combined with those of commuters to benefit the neighborhood as well as the transit system. 300 South Street between the intermodal station and the Rio Grande Depot should develop as a pedestrian oriented plaza and street and make a visual and physical connection to the Depot. Pioneer Park is also a focus for the neighborhood and a tremendous asset. Its edges are especially important and require active uses that combine residential development and a strong civic/cultural presence. To increase its attractiveness, programmed events and programs will be necessary to activate the park. Community service uses such as a community center, local grocer, branch library, social service center, senior citizen center, medical clinics, churches, schools, day care, markets, public transit, veterinarian, offices, galleries and studios will meet the varied needs of residents. Social service agencies and homeless individuals and families will have a place to locate and receive services. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints builds the ZCMI Center Mall in 1976. Governor’s Mansion restored and reoccupied in 1978. Utah State Historical Society moves to the former Rio Grande Depot; the railroad company sold the building to the state for $1 in 1980. Record snowfall causes spring flooding and State Street becomes a river for weeks while the Great Salt Lake overflows its shores, destroying crops and covering roads and highways in 1984.
families are a part of the neighborhood and will continue to be served and integrated with development.

**Implementation Issues**
- Provide the necessary social services in ways that are compatible with new and existing businesses and development.
- Work with Salt Lake City Parks and Recreation and other partners such as the Downtown Alliance to program and activate Pioneer Park.
- Continue the ongoing police presence in the park to increase safety and security in the neighborhood.
- Work with the State and/or developers to determine a suitable reuse for the Rio Grande Depot.
- Work with designers and developers of the intermodal station facility so that it provides a strong terminus to 300 South Street and reinforces the connection between the station and the depot (Landmark Design, n.d.).

This illustration shows just one idea of what the Gateway District may look like when it is fully developed. Some of the buildings shown currently exist and will remain while others are “made-up,” but this illustrates how a residential block might be laid out; how public plazas can be integrated with large cultural and civic buildings; how City Creek may make its way through the area; where large open spaces can be located; how the streets are planted with trees and medians; how the larger block may be broken into smaller blocks, particularly on those blocks which have a strong residential focus; and how it is important to emphasize and reinforce the framework established for the Gateway District.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Salt Lake City is named host city of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, setting off a flurry of construction in preparation and a wave of investigations in the wake of bribery allegations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td>UTA TRAX light rail line from Salt Lake City to Sandy opens, ushering in a new era of urban rail transit after the death of the trolley system almost 60 years prior. Salt Lake City sells a block of Main Street to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sparking off years of lawsuits and public debate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints dedicates its new Conference Center in downtown Salt Lake City.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Salt Lake hosts the Olympic Winter Games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>