

UINTAH CITY GENERAL PLAN



2017 Update

Introduction

Background and Objective

The General Plan is an official document developed for the purpose of guiding the growth and development of the City, primarily in regard to land use. The plan is developed by the Planning Commission with input from the public, and adopted by the City Council.

The following are objectives which were sought in the development of this document:

- Convey the intents and desires of the current residents of the City.
- Respect landowner rights, including development rights.
- Plan for a future that will preserve the character of the City while recognizing the need to accommodate growth and change.

The public's input was gathered in a number of ways, including a survey conducted by students at the University of Utah, formation of a citizen committee, and lastly conducting a public hearing.

Organization

The document is organized with the intention of producing an easily readable and readily modified "living document." To accomplish this the plan consists of a concise overview for each key topic. Each overview includes the following:

- Background and Narrative
- Objective
- Recommendations and Conclusions

Additional background information is provided in the commentary and appendices.

The following key topics are addressed in this plan:

1. Growth & Zoning
2. Transportation
3. Sanitary Waste Disposal
4. Culinary Water
5. Secondary Water
6. Stormwater
7. Pathways
8. Parks
9. Moderate Income Housing
10. Emergency Services Plan

Additional topics which should be considered in future plans include the following:

- Safety
- Historic Preservation
- Nuisance Enforcement
- Communications
- Environmental Protection
- Railroad Relations

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Section 1 – Growth and Zoning

Background and Narrative

Uintah residents have consistently and collectively expressed a desire to preserve a rural atmosphere. However, residents' definition of a rural atmosphere varies. To some a rural atmosphere means large residential lots and drainage swells in lieu of curb and sidewalks. To others it would be better achieved through smaller lots in exchange for preserving more open space.

Uintah's location, character, and beauty make it extremely desirable for residential development. Growth has historically been restrained by the requirement to maintain large residential lots; a requirement which has traditionally been thought to be directly connected to the need for septic systems. This perception, in connection with a desire to maintain a rural atmosphere, creates pressure to resist the development of a sewer system. However, there are other reasons for limiting the overall buildout density of the city. Primary among these are limitations on the transportation infrastructure.

Transportation is discussed in greater detail in its own section. In regard to growth, the critical conclusion is that the capacity of 6600 South is extremely limited. As the only corridor into and through the city, the demand on this corridor must be limited in order to preserve safety.

Recommended land use is shown in the attached land use map.

Objective

Maintain rural atmosphere and character of Uintah while accommodating growth and personal property rights for development.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- Target maximum buildout density based on half acre minimum lot size. This density will approximately double the current population of the City.
- Maximum density should be based on factors other than septic systems versus sewer. These factors include transportation limitations and preservation of the town's character and atmosphere.
- Consider options for development right exchange if a sewer system is developed in the future. This approach could be used to maintain a maximum target population density while allowing for more diverse growth and preserving open space.

Attachments

- Current zoning map
- Land use map
- U.S. Census data (summary)

Section 2 - Transportation

Background and Narrative

This section is written specifically in regard to vehicular traffic. Pedestrian and bike traffic is addressed in the section titled Pathways.

The development of Uintah, particularly in regard to transportation, is extremely restricted due to geography. Uintah is bordered by unbuildable slopes to the north, the Weber River on the south, and divided by east to west by 6600 South and two railroads. This results in 6600 South being the only east to west corridor through the city, with essentially no potential for development of additional entrances. Additionally, much of 6600 South is owned by Union Pacific Railroad (UPR) and therefore options for improvements are limited.

According to discussions with local Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) representatives, there are currently no plans for modifications to US. Hwy 89 north of Interstate 84 in UDOT's immediate or future plans.

In general terms a two lane road can be expected to handle approximately 8,000 vehicles per day. A traffic study is needed to determine the existing demand on 6600 South. It should be noted that the capacity indicated is in regard to vehicular traffic only and does not address the pedestrian and biker demand that 6600 South also supports. After a determination of the existing demand on the road, the city may determine that a lower threshold for maximum traffic is more appropriate. This threshold should be considered in regard to growth and future buildout density.

Objective

Plan for future transportation demands at buildout density. Provide safe travel into, out of, and within Uintah now and in the future.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- Require east to west interconnection of new residential developments in order to reduce the demand on 6600 South for travel within the city.
- Paint shoulder lines on 6600 South to establish 11 foot lane widths. This visual constraint is intended to slow traffic as well as define shoulders for pedestrian and biker traffic. Offsetting the center of the road in order to provide a wider shoulder on one side should also be considered.
- Conduct traffic study of 6600 South. Alternatively, this information may be obtained as part of a site plan review process for a commercial development.
- Work with UPR to develop profiles agreeable to UPR in regard to the offset requirements between 6600 South and the railway. This may provide options for minor relocations or widening of the road to better accommodate pedestrian and bike traffic.

Attachments

- Existing and future road map

Section 3 - Sanitary Waste Disposal

Background and Narrative

With the exception of the Cottonwood Estates Mobile Home Park, Uintah residents and commercial buildings utilize septic systems for disposal of sanitary waste. This section considers the need for development of a sewer system to accommodate future growth of the city.

Septic systems in the city are subject to approval by the Weber County Health Department. A representative of the department was contacted for consultation on the subject in order to learn what if any restrictions the health department could place on the city if sewer is not developed. In other areas of the county the department has conducted testing to determine maximum permissible densities which are allowed where septic systems are utilized. Uintah has not been included in these studies to date and due to the small size of the city it is not anticipated that a study will be conducted in the near future. In the absence of a site specific study, the health department is obligated to approve septic systems within the city, provided that local ordinances and requirements are met. However, the department may significantly restrict the size of the homes for which the system is approved.

The development of a sewer system in Uintah has traditionally been resisted due to the perceived cost and in a desire to slow growth of the city. As discussed in the section titled Growth, there are other factors which will limit the future maximum density of the city. A sewer system does not necessarily need to be considered an invitation for a population boom. An updated study is needed to determine alternatives and associated costs for development of a sewer system.

Objective

Plan for sanitary waste disposal which is environmentally responsible and which will not unnecessarily restrict the future growth of the city.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- Update study and preliminary design for sewer system. This will provide anticipated cost as well as provide needed information for developers to install “dry sewers” in anticipation for a future system.

Attachments

- Sanitary Sewer Feasibility Study by Jones & Associates, dated July 1999.

Section 4 – Culinary Water

Background and Narrative

The Uintah City culinary water system is divided into three pressure zones. The system was upgraded in 2005 to accommodate anticipated future growth within the city consisting of up to 813 total connections. This represents an approximate increase of 100% in relation to existing connections.

Uintah city culinary water is provided by contract from Weber Basin Water Conservancy District. The contract is setup as a stepped system where Uintah commits to purchase a set amount of water. When the city exceeds this amount they are bumped into the next step.

The limitations of the existing secondary water system (primarily resulting from ditches which were not extended to residential lots at the time of development) necessitates that many of the residential lots in the city rely on culinary water for irrigation of landscaping and gardening. This places a burden on the culinary water system which would be relieved by a pressurized secondary system.

Objective

Provide safe, clean, and reliable water infrastructure.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- Maintain water system to minimize repairs which could otherwise be avoided.
- Promote water conservation by maintaining a water rate structure which accurately corresponds to actual usage.

Attachments

- Culinary Water System Map

Section 5 – Secondary Water

Background and Narrative

Uintah City is not a provider of secondary water. The existing secondary irrigation system in the city primarily consists of three canal companies which provide water diverted from the Weber River or collected from springs and delivered by gravity through open ditches and limited piping. The system was developed specifically for agricultural irrigation.

As the agricultural lands of Uintah have been developed for residential use, the secondary system has not kept up. Many of neighborhoods have limited and sometime no access to the ditches. The end result is that many if not most residences in the city rely on culinary water as the primary source of irrigation for landscaping and gardening.

While some may argue that it is not the city's responsibility to provide secondary water, the truth is that the inadequacies of the existing system place a burden on the culinary water system for which the city is responsible. For this reason it is important for the city to understand and plan for the impact that the lack of a pressurized secondary water system places on the culinary system, whether or not the city chooses to become a provider of secondary water.

In 2010, a feasibility study for the development of a pressurized irrigation water system was completed by Franson Civil Engineers. This study was conducted following the findings of the survey referenced by the 2006 general plan update which indicated that a large percentage (75 percent) of residents considered pressurized secondary water as an important asset to the community.

Objective

Accommodate access to economic source of secondary water for all residences.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- The city's involvement in the provision of secondary water is directly related to the impact that the lack of a secondary system has on the culinary system.
- Maintain water fee structure which accurately reflects actual water usage by individual residents
- The city should continue to evaluate the need for pressurized secondary water as a means for offsetting the demands on the culinary water system.

Attachments

- None

Section 6 - Stormwater

Background and Narrative

The existing stormwater system in Uintah consists primarily of drainage swales along residential streets. These swales are intended as continuous retention ponds as opposed to a conveyance system. The system works well when the drainage swales are maintained. However, many residents fill the swales in with impermeable topping which forces stormwater to adjacent residents.

With the exception of areas where the swales are not maintained, the existing system has functioned adequately and fits with the character of the city desired by residents.

In addition to drainage swales, there is a limited amount of stormwater piping in the city. These are shown in the attached storm drain map.

Objective

Provide for safe conveyance of stormwater which meets state and federal regulatory requirements.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- No changes are recommended in regard to stormwater for residential developments.
- The city engineer should verify that all future developments (residential and commercial) are in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Attachments

- Existing Storm Drain Map

Section 7 - Pathways

Background and Narrative

To date the development of Uintah has resulted in a number of neighborhood pockets with access only to 6600 South. This adds to the burden on 6600 South as the primary corridor through the city, and discourages bike and pedestrian travel due to safety concerns. The development of alternative routes for pedestrians and bikers within Uintah will improve safety for the pedestrians and bikers (many of whom are children), reduce the demand on 6600 South and thereby improve safety for vehicular traffic, and promote healthy lifestyles.

Primary concerns expressed by residents in regard to pathways within the city include potential criminal activity and invasion of privacy for residents adjacent to pathways. This concern is based on connections to pathways outside of the city.

Weber Pathways owns several parcels of land within the city and has published a master plan of pathways within the city and surrounding areas. These pathways include east to west corridors on both the north and south sides of the Weber River, as well as several north to south routes. The pathway on the north side of the river is largely routed through existing residential streets and provides little value as a pathway to nonresidents. The Weber Pathways plan also shows a future bridge across the river located on property currently owned by the Utah State Road Commission.

Objective

Promote residential pedestrian and biker transportation through the city as a means for improving safety as well as a promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- Support and promote development of pathways for pedestrian and bikers travelling within Uintah to use as an alternate to 6600 South.
- The city could consider providing encouragement to developers for providing pathway access by allowing an increase in allowable housing density.
- Pathways within Uintah should target residential travel within the city.
- Published maps should not illustrate east to west pathways on the north side of the Weber River.
- Support the development by Weber Pathways of a trail on the south side of the Weber River. Connections to the trail should not be located through existing neighborhoods.
- Pathways and developments which encourage pedestrian and biker traffic through Uintah by nonresidents should be discouraged, other than north to south traffic along the Alternate Bonneville Shoreline Trail.

Attachments

- Existing and future pathway map

Section 8 - Parks

Background and Narrative

Uintah City currently has two parks. These include the Uintah City Park at 2105 East 6550 South, and the Memorial Park located south of the City Hall.

The Uintah City Park is the home of U-days and provides recreational opportunities such as tennis, softball, little league baseball, and a playground. The park is also the location of the Scout House and a covered bowery, which provide additional opportunities for community and family gatherings.

The Memorial Park is a small grassy area south of the City Hall. This park includes a small pavilion and is intended for more casual use and smaller gatherings.

There are several parcels of land within the City which are well suited for use as a public park. However, there is little to no support within the city for the development of another traditional park. Resident concerns include increased traffic in existing neighborhoods, the cost of development, and the potential for increased criminal activity if the parks are connected with pathways outside of the City.

While there is concern over development of a traditional park, there is a strong desire by residents to preserve open space. Providing improved access to the Weber River is also a feature that would benefit many of the residents of the City, but must be weighed against the property rights of residents currently living adjacent to the river.

Objective

Provide recreational opportunities which accommodate as many interests as possible and to promote healthy lifestyles, while protecting private property rights and the character of existing residential neighborhoods.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- The City should acquire the property illustrated in Attachment 1 (currently owned by the Utah State Road Commission). This property should be acquired with the intention of maintaining it as open space. This property currently includes an easement owned by the Division of Wildlife Resources, which provides them the right to develop parking and angler access. The City should work with DWR to minimize the impact of this easement on the adjacent residents. The DWR could apply this right at any time, no matter who owns the property. Acquiring the property will ensure that the City is in the strongest position possible to guide the use of the land.
- The attached park map identifies additional parcels which the City should acquire if given the opportunity. These properties should be used for access to the river as opposed to development as traditional parks.

Attachments

- Existing and future park map

Section 9 – Moderate Income Housing

Background and Narrative

Utah Code requires that the general plan for cities address moderate income housing (MIH), including an estimate of the need for the development of additional MIH. Consideration should be given to the State Legislature's determination that cities should facilitate a reasonable opportunity for a variety of housing, including MHI.

Moderate income housing is defined by the Utah Code as housing occupied or reserved by households with a gross household income equal to or less than 80 percent of the median gross income for households of the same size in the county. The latest US census data indicates that the current median household income in Weber County is \$56,216. The most recent state certified survey of Uintah was conducted in 2016 and found that 63.3% of Uintah residents fall within the criteria for low to moderate income.

The existing residences in Uintah are diverse and offer a full range of housing options for households of varying incomes. This diversity is an asset to the character of the community. However, the majority of the current MIH is comprised of the Cottonwood Estates mobile home park and older subdivisions. Housing in new developments does not accommodate MIH. As the city continues to grow, options which would promote a continuation of the diverse character of the city should be considered. This may include the development right exchange described in the Growth & Zoning section of this plan.

Objective

Facilitate a reasonable opportunity for residents of varying incomes to obtain housing in Uintah City.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- No changes to the existing ordinances are recommended at this time.

Attachments

- State certified income survey, dated 2016

Section 10 – Emergency Services Plan

Background and Narrative

As with most communities, there are a number of potential natural disasters to which Uintah City may be subjected and for which we should be prepared. These include earthquakes, flooding, fires, and significant wind events.

A detailed emergency services plan is needed in order for the City to adequately respond in the case of emergency. The Fire Department is traditionally looked to for support in this area; however, additional measures can and should be taken in order to improve preparedness and readiness.

Objective

Maintain a state of readiness by the City and residents to respond to emergency events.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- The City should maintain an updated and detailed Emergency Services Plan (ESP), which is coordinated with Weber County and adjacent municipalities. This plan should address as a minimum communications, shelter, distribution, rally points, and transportation.
- Communication – The ESP should assume no availability of cell communication in the event of a natural disaster. The communication component of the plan should also address the need for a notification system (such as would be required in the event of a dam breach on the Weber River). Continued support of local HAM radio operators through exercises such as “The Great Shakeout” is an important step.
- Shelter – Identify a location (such as the LDS Church and/or Crossroads Church) for survivors to gather. Confirm this location with the Red Cross. Shelter management personnel should be trained (some exist).
- Rally Points – Identify alternative rally points in addition to the primary shelter location. The Crossroads Church could be used for residents on the east side of Hwy 89 or in the event that flooding requires a rally point at higher ground.
- Transportation – The existing roads should be reviewed to ensure emergency services can respond to disasters throughout the City. Areas where deficiencies are identified should be addressed.

Attachments

None

Section 1 Commentary – Growth and Zoning

Estimate of buildout density

The future buildout household density using half acre average lot sizes was estimated by assuming an average of 1.8 lots per acre in order to account for roads (which equates to an effective usage rate of 90%). This approximation was based on an informal review of the existing developments in Uintah which vary between 1.5 lots per acre to 1.85 lots per acre.

The current number of households in Uintah is approximately 390. The total acreage of buildable land within Uintah City limits and which may reasonably be expected to be annexed in the future for residential development is approximately 240 acres. At 1.8 lots per acre the expected growth is 432 new residential lots. This represents a 110 percent increase relative to existing, which is the basis for the statement in the plan that this would approximately double the density of Uintah.

For comparison, the buildout density for Uintah was also estimated using an average of quarter acre lots. A lower effective usage rates of 80 percent was used to account for a greater amount of land that would be taken up by roads if smaller lots were developed. At this effective usage rate the expected growth would be 768 new residential lots. This represents an increase relative to the existing density of 197 percent (effectively tripling the current density).

Example of development right exchange

The following examples illustrate how a development right exchange could be used to maintain the target buildout density, while allowing for flexibility in subdivision development and preservation of open space. This approach could only be implemented after the development of a sewer system.

The following examples are for two 10 acre parcels (A and B) which both contain 10 acres of buildable land. Based on an average of 1.8 lots per acre, each of these properties include the development rights for 18 lots.

Example 1

- The owner of Property B purchases the rights to 9 residential lots from the owner of Property A.
- Property B may be developed with up to 27 lots, but must still satisfy all other development requirements, including frontage, etc..
- Property A may be developed with a maximum of 9 lots.

Example 2

- The owner of Property B purchases the development rights for all 18 permitted lots from Property A.
- Property B may be developed with up to 36 lots, but must still satisfy all other development requirements, including frontage, etc..

- Property A may not be developed. A permanent easement will be recorded to preserve Property A as open space.

Section 2 Commentary - Transportation

Transportation in Uintah, particularly in regard to the limitations and safety concerns on 6600 South, is a critical issue in the eyes of the majority of the city's residents. The city's options are limited due to land ownership restraints. The city should continue to work with Union Pacific Railroad (UPR) in an effort to improve the safety for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Section 3 Commentary - Sanitary Waste Disposal

General

Consideration by the city regarding development of a sewer system in Uintah would surely create significant discussion among the residents, much of which may be contentious. However, this potential should not inhibit the city's efforts to obtain updated information in an effort to make informed decisions.

Potential Health Department Restrictions

As discussed in the plan, the Weber County Health Department is the approving authority for septic systems in Uintah. While the department is currently obligated to approve septic systems for residential lots in Uintah provided that they satisfy local ordinances, the department does have the ability to significantly restrict the maximum number of bedrooms permitted in new homes. This limitation has the potential for negatively impact the property value of buildable land in Uintah.

The Health Department currently does not have the authority to dictate the minimum lot sizes for which septic systems are approved within Uintah. However, if the city were ever to be included in a site specific study, the department would then have the ability to dictate minimum lot size (or maximum density) for future development in the city. The proximity of Uintah to the Weber River, as well as the presence of predominantly free draining soils in the city, make it very likely that these restrictions would be severe.

Environmental Impact

Studies have not been conducted to determine the impact of the existing septic systems in Uintah, or the potential impact of new systems.

Updated Study

A feasibility study for the construction of a sewer system in Uintah was completed by Jones & Associates in 1999. The plan recommends that this study should be updated in order to better inform the city leaders and residence of the financial impact that installing a sewer system would have.

Potential sources for funding assistance have changed since the completion of the 1999 study, and continue to change. Updating the study will put the city in a better position to act quickly when funding is available and if the city determines that a sewer system should be constructed.

Section 4 Commentary – Culinary Water

No comments.

Section 5 Commentary – Secondary Water

It is difficult to determine if there is a consensus among city residents concerning the development of a pressurized secondary water system. The survey referenced by the 2006 general plan update indicated that 75 percent of residents considered pressurized secondary as an important asset to the community. Similarly, the limited survey which was conducted by University of Utah students in preparation for this update also indicated that pressurized secondary was viewed as a positive development, and likely inevitable in the coming 20 years.

These survey findings appear to stand in contrast to resident reaction to a 2010 feasibility study performed by Franson Civil Engineers, which considered multiple options for converting the existing gravity fed system to a pressurized system. The study was met with considerable resistance by what may have been a minority but very vocal contingent of residents. Resistance centered on the potential cost as well as what some considered the fundamental question of whether secondary water should fall within the responsibility of the city.

The city's culinary water system is directly impacted by the lack of a pressurized secondary water system. For this reason the city's actions in regard to the secondary water system should be tied directly to the impact to the culinary system.

Section 6 Commentary – Stormwater

No comments.

Section 7 Commentary - Pathways

Opinions regarding pathways in Uintah are divided by resident location, particularly in regard to a pathway along the Weber River. Residents adjacent to the river are generally opposed to any kind of path, even a path on the south side of the river. The city does not have a significant amount of control over a pathway on the south side of the river and most residents seem to recognize that it is likely that a path will someday be located there.

Existing residents do not want a connection across the river to a future pathway on the south of the trail to be located near their homes. Many residents indicated that they would prefer to access a river pathway at the east or west end of the city rather than at a river crossing within the city. Concerns include transient activity, vandalism, and other criminal activity.

There appears to be general support for pathways which provide pedestrian traffic within the city for residents only, with connections to larger trails at the perimeter of the town, but not in a way that invites outside traffic into and through the city.

Section 8 Commentary - Parks

As indicated in the plan, there appears to be very little support from residents for the development of an additional traditional park. Future park plans should accommodate other activities such as river access (see pathways for concerns) and other outdoor activities. Preserving open space with low maintenance should be objectives in the development of such a park.

The plan indicates that the city should acquire the 8.8 acre parcel of land currently owned by the Utah State Road Commission and located at the west end of 6850 South. This property possesses the characteristics needed for the non-traditional park described above. However, there are resident concerns which would need to be addressed. Primary among these would be to ensure that the park would not be used as an access to a trail on the south side of the river. The Utah Division of Natural Resources (DNR) currently possesses an easement on the property, which gives them the right to provide fisherman access through the property. The nearby residents have expressed concern that this type of access would lead to a significant increase in traffic and potentially other problems. To date the DNR has expressed a strong desire to work with the city in the development of their easement. This would likely remain the case whether the city owns the property or not, but city ownership would provide the city the best opportunity to dictate the use of the land.

Section 9 Commentary – Moderate Income Housing

No Comments.

Section 10 Commentary – Emergency Services Plan

No Comments.