

# Chapter 1

## Citizen Planning in Sevier County

### Sevier County Planning Commission and Citizen Sub-Committees

In 1992, the Utah Legislature consolidated local government land use regulations into a single law referred to as the County Land Use Development and Management Act. Similar legislation was also adopted for municipalities.

Application of Title 17, Chapter 27 of the Utah Code Annotated (U.C.A.) requires that Sevier County “shall prepare and adopt a comprehensive General Plan for: (i) the present and future needs of the County; and (ii) the growth and development of the land within any part of Sevier County.” The Sevier County General Plan is to provide for the health, safety, general welfare and each of the additional purposes specified in the Code.

U.C.A. also specifies that the Sevier County Planning Commission “shall make and recommend to the County Commission a proposed General Plan for Sevier County. “The Plan may include planning for incorporated areas if, in the Planning Commission’s judgment, the areas are related to the planning of the unincorporated territory in Sevier County as a whole.

“Elements of the Sevier County Plan that address incorporated areas shall not be part of an official plan or part of a municipal plan unless those provisions are recommended by the municipal planning

commission and adopted by the city or town council.”<sup>1</sup>

Initially, the Sevier County Planning Commission, in consultation with the County Commission, identified eight major elements to be addressed in the General Plan. The Commission recognized that many of the elements were interrelated. Through discussion and review, these elements were expanded to include the following:

- Agricultural Industries & Lands
- County, Federal & State (Public) Lands
- Culture, Historic Preservation, Recreation & Tourism
- Economic Development & Employment
- Education, Health & Human Services
- Housing
- Land, Water & Natural Resources
- Public Facilities & Infrastructure
- Orderly Growth & Demographics
- Transportation

Under direction of the Sevier County Planning Commission, many of the above elements were combined under the chapter headings outlined in the table of contents.

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<sup>1</sup>Utah Code Annotated: Title 17. Chapter 27. Part 3

With input from County Commissioners, elected officials, and citizens throughout the county, the Sevier County Planning Commission invited interested citizens to become members of Planning Commission Sub-Committees to address each of these major elements. A member of the Planning Commission served as chair for each sub-committee.

## **Planning Process**

General Plan meetings for each of the Planning Commission Sub-Committees began in October 1996 and continued until the General Plan was adopted by the County Commission in February 1998. Through policy recommendations adopted by the County Commission, many of the Planning Commission Sub-Committees will remain intact and continue their vital services to Sevier County.

Many interested citizens attended the sub-committee meetings and offered valuable input on General Plan elements. A number of citizens have continued to provide important data and input to the Planning and County Commissions pertaining to county land use. Much of the information from individual sub-committees correlated with the expanded elements being formulated in the General Plan.

Public notice for each of the sub-committee hearings was printed in county newspapers (Figure I) and broadcast on Radio Station KSVC, Richfield. Several public informational and participation programs were also broadcast as a public service by KSVC.

Each of the sub-committees also assisted in formulating questions for a citizen's survey, which was published in the *Richfield Reaper*, a newspaper with approximately 5,500 subscribers throughout Sevier County. Additionally, a telephone survey was conducted under direction of the Planning Commission. Summary findings from the responses to each of these surveys are included in this chapter.<sup>2</sup>

Detailed minutes of each sub-committee meeting were recorded; general and technical information was assembled, and extensive input was received from interested citizens and committee members. Mission statements relating to each of the General Plan elements were drafted. Reports addressing the findings and recommendations from each Planning Commission subcommittee were also drafted.

Copies of all committee reports were assembled and sent to each municipality in the county and to the Six County Association of Governments. This encouraged and facilitated review by, and comments from, interested citizens living in, or adjacent to, one of the 11 incorporated communities in Sevier County.

Several public informational meetings which addressed each of the sub-committee reports were also conducted by the Planning Commission in January and February, 1997. Meetings were held in Koosharem, Monroe, Richfield, and Salina. Progress on, and recommendations relating to the General Plan, have also been

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<sup>2</sup>A copy of Survey Questions, response data and citizen comments may be reviewed by contacting the Office of the Sevier County Clerk in Richfield, Utah. Telephone 896-9262.

discussed in each of the regularly-scheduled meetings of the Sevier County Planning Commission and County Commission through the later months of 1996 and all of 1997, It is intended and hoped that this extensive public discourse and amendments related to the Sevier County General Plan will continue indefinitely.

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### Public Notice

**Notice is hereby given that the Sevier County Planning Commission General Planning sub-committees have scheduled public meetings for the purpose of receiving public input on elements of the new Sevier County General Plan. The committees and chairs are: Economic Development (Mark Cox); Housing and Infrastructure (Sam Ware); Education and Public Facilities (Milo Medley); Water and Natural Resources (Kirk Forbush); Recreation, Tourism and Historical Preservation (Beverly Anderson); Orderly Growth and Demographics (Roger Nielsen); Agricultural Industries and Lands (Scott Johnson); and County, Federal, and State (Public) Lands (Cecelia Bytheway). Attendance and comments at these public meetings is strongly encouraged. For information regarding meeting times and places, call the Sevier County Courthouse at 896-9262, ext. 254. Published in the Salina Sun on October 30 and November 6, 1996.**

Figure I. Public Notice of Planning Commission, Sub-Committee Hearings on the Sevier County General Plan. Similar notices were published in the *Richfield Reaper* and *Salina Sun* during October, November and December 1996, and in January and February 1997.

### Citizen Survey Results - Summary

Data was collected and summarized by the Computer Information Center at the Sevier Valley Applied Technology Center. Response to the survey printed in the newspaper produced data that differed somewhat from the telephone survey. Although the questions were the same, the differing responses were expected. There was some correlation of the data received. The goal was to complete a statistically accurate sampling of residents in Sevier County and collect data that would be representative of citizens in the County as a whole.

Given the estimated 1997 population of Sevier County, 17,682, the objective was to obtain responses from a minimum of 176 citizens, or 1% of the total population. (1/2 of 1% is considered a statistically accurate sample in random sampling). One hundred eighteen (118) responses were received by telephone and 68 newspaper responses were received (for a total of 186 responses). Telephone responses were taken at random. The data was summarized as noted above, analyzed and inferences drawn.

Based on composite data, a profile of Sevier County citizens was formulated. Based on the response received, the Survey data seemed to indicate that of the respondents in Sevier County:

- **63% are employed in the Richfield area;** 20% are employed in the Salina area; 12% work in other county locations, and 5% work outside Sevier County; (Response percentages rounded to nearest number. Less than 1% of respondents were unemployed).

- **Respondents have lived in Sevier County an average of 21.6 years;**  
58% have lived in the county 26 or more years;  
19% - 16-25 years  
13% - 6-10 years  
8% - 1-5 years  
2% - 11-15 years.
- **Respondents were, on average, 54 years of age. 34% were age 66 and over;**  
30% were age 36-50  
24% were age 51-65  
7% were age 26-35  
5% were age 18-25.
- **Respondents receive an average family income of \$23,300 annually;**  
40% have a family income of \$21-35,000  
28% have a family income of \$36-50,000  
24% have a family income less than \$20,000; and  
8% have a family income of more than \$50,000.
- **87% of the respondents own their place of residence. 13% rent their place of residence.**
- **68% do not own other real estate in Sevier County. 32% own other real estate in Sevier County.**

- **53% of respondents own less than 1 acre of land in Sevier County;**  
16% own 1-10 acres in Sevier County;  
14% own more than 50 acres in Sevier County;  
10% own 11-30 acres in Sevier County;  
6% own 31-50 acres in Sevier County.

When ranking land use issues in Sevier County, respondents:

- Were **almost evenly split on the importance** of limiting growth;
- Felt that **preserving agricultural** was an issue of highest importance;
- **Strongly favor restricting building in the unincorporated areas;**
- Would encourage residential development **within cities and towns;**
- **Were uncertain about whether promoting development and growth would always be good.** (This response may seem inconsistent with the first response. If so, it may be due, in part, to the way the question was phrased or interpreted by respondents)

When ranking the importance of the following needs in Sevier County respondents:

- **Favor better access** and improved county roadways;
- **Believe economic development and employment opportunities are highly important;**
- See **affordable housing** as an important need in Sevier County;
- Regard **improved public services** as a low priority;
- Attach **the highest importance to local input** on management of public lands;

Respondents also:

- Regard **the availability and quality of medical services** in Sevier County as:
  - Exceptional: 13%
  - Good: 45%**
  - Adequate: 32%
  - Poor: 10%;

- Rate **public facilities in Sevier County as:**

Exceptional: 10%  
**Good: 54%**  
Adequate: 29%  
Poor: 7%.

- Rate **public facilities in their community as:**

Exceptional: 10%  
**Good: 48%**  
Adequate: 34%  
Poor: 8%.

- **See no need for a sewer system** in my area:

Yes: 25%      **No: 75%**<sup>3</sup>

- Rate the **culinary water system In their area as:**

Exceptional: 18%  
**Good: 50%**  
Adequate: 22%  
Poor: 10%.

- **Choose to spend tourism tax revenues for:**

18 Hole Golf Course: 20%;  
Bike Paths / ATV Trails: 25%;  
Tourism/Travel Information Center: 22%;  
**Expansion of Fair Grounds: 27%;**

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<sup>3</sup>In Sevier County, only the Cities of Aurora, Redmond, Richfield, and Salina have installed waste water collection and treatment facilities,

- Indicate they were familiar with services of *Sevier Valley Applied Technology Center*  
**Yes: 77%**      No: 23%.
  
- Know about educational services at the *University Center* in Richfield:  
**Yes: 63%**      No: 37%.
  
- Use the following **educational services:**

Classes:	4%
<b>Technology Classes:</b>	<b>22%</b>
Continuing Education Classes:	2%
Other Service:	4%
<b>None:</b>	<b>58%</b>
  
- **Were not in favor of a tax increase to continue services of the County Bookmobile: .**  
**Yes: 46%;      No: 54%;**

There was significant response to the questions, which elicited verbal or written comments. Verbatim, some of the responses were such as the following:

“There is too much growth in this area and shouldn’t growth take care of the rising taxes? The only thing that doesn’t go up is income.”

“The school system has cut the teachers and is not replacing them. This is causing over-crowding in South Sevier schools.”

“I just wish for wise use of tax dollars.”

“[The] planter strips put in by Richfield City are full of weeds. This does not amount to an improvement.... rather is a nuisance because of weeds growing and seeding yards.”

“[I] do not support tax increase for ANYTHING. Cut welfare housing and give money to the bookmobile. Do not want a big fancy information center. Favor using present one with its volunteer staff”

“[I] do NOT want welfare housing as ‘affordable housing.’ This hurts private landlords by leaving their rentals empty and causing their tax dollars to be used to destroy their own source of income.”

“[I] took one tech class but felt that it was poorly structured.”

“We do not want environmentalists to control the use of land.”

“We need a more up-to-date library, and would like the money put there that is now being spent on the bookmobile. [The] public is mobile enough to use the public library.”

“[We] need better law enforcement but fewer enforcers.”

“Keep the present library open longer.”

“Abandon present Fairgrounds and move these activities to Salina. Present Fairgrounds is costly and not necessary.”

“The County should consider having full-time EMT’s.”

“We should clean up trash yards in cities and in the County.”

“[I] favor equal support for all cities in the County: Monroe, Salina and Richfield.”

“[We] should begin early and continue mosquito spraying.”

“We need a County-wide sewer system.”

“We should consider having a County Library.”

“Do away with the two party system for voting in Sevier County and all city elections.”

“Enforce zoning laws for fencing around junk yards.”

“Water resource development and study.”

“Study use of water on irrigated land – sprinkle vs. flood irrigation.”

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A copy of each of the Survey Questions and data from respondents, including all written comments, is available for review at the office of the County Clerk in Richfield, Utah.

## **Public Hearings on General Plan**

As noted previously, each of the Sevier County Planning Commission Sub-Committees met regularly for a number of months in many meetings that were open to the general public. The Planning Commission also held several public informational meetings to review the initial reports and recommendations from the Sub-Committees. Additionally, the Planning Commission and the County Commission held a number of formal public hearings as required by the County Land Use Development and Management Act.

The Sevier County Planning Commission has the statutory role and responsibility for preparing the General Plan and recommending the Plan to the County commission for adoption. State law requires the Planning Commission to hold one or more public hearings before recommending the Plan be adopted.

In order to obtain as much public input as possible and to promote general knowledge and understanding of the General Plan, the Sevier County Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on June 24, 1997. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Planning Commission recommended the General Plan to the County Commission for review. The County Commission noticed and held a Public Hearing on July 7, 1997. The County Commission suggested that the Hearing be continued pending further review by the Planning Commission.

At a public meeting on July 22, 1997 the County Commission suggested the General Plan outline be amended and that additional elements be added. These suggestions included additional

information related to human services, public facilities, infrastructure and transportation. It was also suggested that the information relating to education, health and human services be amended and reorganized under different chapter headings.

When these changes were made, the Planning Commission noticed and held an additional public hearing on November 19, 1997. At this meeting the Planning commission recommended the amended Plan to the County Commission for adoption.

The Sevier County Commission submitted the Plan to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget for final review in November 1997. When this review was completed, amendments were included in the General Plan.

The Sevier County Commission noticed a public hearing for Monday February 2, 1998 and by unanimous action, accepted the General Plan as amended and recommended by the Planning Commission. County Commission also enacted an Ordinance mandating compliance with policies and provisions of the General Plan.

### **Amending the Plan**

Amendment(s) to the Sevier County General plan may occur at any time by following the procedures required by U.C.A.. Title17, Chapter 27, Part 3, Section 303, The Sevier County Planning Commission will first issue a recommendation to amend the Plan. Upon at least 14 days notice, the Planning Commission will conduct a Public hearing on the amended Plan. The amended Plan will then be sent to the County Commission.

Upon at least 14 days notice, the Sevier County Commission shall also hold a Public Hearing to discuss suggested amendment(s) to the Plan. The County Commission may then a) adopt the Plan; b) amend the proposed General Plan and adopt or reject it as amended; or c) reject the amended Plan (See U.C.A. 17-27-303)