Ivins City General Plan Draft

Update: March 25, 2024

after edits by City Council on March 21, 2024

Notes:

Cover page photo:

- A summer shot of Red Mountain and surroundings with blue sky and green vegetation

IVINS CITY
UTAH

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1: FOREWORD



Mayor Chris Hart

The General Plan, or "the Plan" is the primary guiding document and the principal tool to be used to create the future of Ivins. It tells the story of what Ivins was, is and ought to become through thoughtful and careful planning based on the vision, values, goals and strategies described herein.

Ivins is an extraordinary place and its residents know it. This Plan is designed to keep it that way by protecting and preserving its cherished vistas and quality of life while promoting the type of growth that will further enhance it by sensitively filling needs while elevating the character of the community.

The General Plan addresses a wide variety of topics that affect our way of life including safety and security, essential services, recreational opportunities, the city's ambiance and character and quality of life issues like open space and the arts.

This Plan is to be taken seriously. It is the product of intensive public engagement and thousands of hours of effort on the part of the Planning Commission, City Council and City Staff. We deeply value the natural beauty, peaceful environment and connective tissue of our community and are intent on perpetuating them well into the future. It is to be scrutinized and followed by elected and appointed officials, city staff and the development community in all their planning.

The 2024 Ivins General Plan follows earlier versions adopted in 2008 and 2015. Those guided Ivins to become the exceptional community that has drawn most of us here. This version was adopted in _____ and, if it is properly implemented, will attract many more who want to live or work here, or visit because it was kept the extraordinary place that we love.

Mayor Chris Hart

Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone who attended any of the Talkabouts and Town Hall meetings, sent in email suggestions, participated in the *General Plan Resident Survey*, or helped the planning process in any other way to make Ivins' future brighter.

- **Planning Commission**: Perry Brown, Doug Clifford, Pam Gardiol, Derek Larsen, Dave Robinson
- **City Council**: Mayor Chris Hart, Lance Anderson, Sharon Barton, Sharon Gillespie, Mike Scott, Kevin Smith
- **Pro Bono Advisor**: Judy Gubler (prior City Manager)
- **City Staff**: Dale Coulam, City Manager; Chuck Gillette, Public Works Director; Mike Haycock, Building Department Director; Tom Jorgensen, Assistant City Engineer; Benny Sorensen, Parks & Recreation Director; Cade Viser, Finance Director; Bob Flowers, Chief of Police; Andrew Parker, Fire Chief
- **Survey Committee**: Lois Diehl, Sharon Gillespie, Lisa Ganz, Sally Tom, Chris Haddad, Pam Gardiol, Sara Dupre, Sharon Barton, Mike & Dana Cook, Jack & Jackie Sculley, Cade Visser, Staff, Mayor Hart, Mike Scott

2: INTRODUCTION

Ivins is a scenic, safe, and growing city with just over 11,000 people. It started with thirteen hardy farming families who moved to the arid "Santa Clara Bench" between 1922 and 1926.

Located on the west side of Washington County, Ivins lies between the cities of St. George and Santa Clara on the east and the Shivwits Band of Paiutes reservation on the west. To the south is the Bureau of Land Management's Santa Clara River Reserve and Land Hill.



Snow Canyon State Park, the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, and the Red Mountain Wilderness sit directly on the northern border of Ivins. They provide a stunning backdrop for the City along with tens of thousands of acres of immediately accessible open space.

Nestled beneath its iconic Big Red Mountain, Ivins is home to Rocky Vista University's College of Osteopathic Medicine, the Southern Utah Veterans' Home, Tuacahn Center for the Arts, the Center for the Arts in Kayenta and five major resort properties.

Sensitivity to the natural environment and beautiful setting led the City to adopt comprehensive development regulations. Streetscape and open space requirements added attractive roadways. A focus on an active lifestyle created an extensive trail network and bike lanes throughout the city.

The beauty of the night sky prompted ordinances to protect it. Animal rights advocates helped establish the first no-kill animal shelter in Utah. A growing arts community helped create an Arts Master Plan and the Ivins City Arts Commission.

The community knew water would be the key to its future. That resulted in a culture of conservation that drove Ivins to become the leader statewide in water conservation standards.

Rapid growth presented serious infrastructure challenges. In response, Ivins built detention dams and a storm drainage system, which carries water away even in extreme storms. The City developed a roadway system with highly functional, decorative roundabouts at major intersections, landscaped setbacks and medians, and attractive street and multi-use trail lighting. Growth also led to the development of an extensive fiber-optic network in Ivins.

Although Ivins has gained popularity as a tourist destination, it is primarily a peaceful bedroom community with pockets of agriculture.

3. GROWTH & CAREFUL PLANNING

Ivins is at a crossroads amid significant growth in Washington County. The county is expected to almost double its population from just over 210,000 people in 2024 to almost 400,000 by 2050, according to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute.

Ivins is also likely to double, or more than double its population by 2050. That is if past growth trends continue.

The City's population grew 3.9% a year between 2000 and 2024. Growth was a little slower in the past decade, averaging 2.9% a year between 2010 and 2020.



Based on past trends, Ivins would reach between 21,000 and 28,000 people by 2050. Will that happen? We don't know. The big question is not "Will we grow?" but "How will we grow?" To answer that question, Ivins needs to address three major challenges:

1. Residents have expressed concern over recent patterns of growth. The Plan identifies ways to provide for responsible growth in the community. On top of that, the goal of the Plan is to find growth strategies that create benefits for the community.
2. Water is in limited supply in our region. Ivins has some water rights, but most of our water is provided by the Washington County Water Conservancy District (WCWCD). Most of their water comes from the Virgin River and the river's flow has essentially been fully committed. Water to support growth beyond today will come almost totally from conservation and developing the region's reuse system.
3. Increasingly, the ability to buy a home is out of reach for first-time home buyers, and workforce housing is in short supply for the City's current businesses and emerging resorts. The average cost of a home in Ivins is significantly higher than prices in our neighboring cities. Household income is not keeping pace with rising housing costs, not only in Ivins but throughout the county and state.

Addressing these and other important considerations during the planning and decision-making process will lead to the well-conceived community we desire to ensure we protect our scenic vistas, preserve our unique character, and provide for the health, safety, and welfare of our residents.

4. ESTABLISHING THE GENERAL PLAN'S DIRECTION

The foundation of the 2024 *Ivins City General Plan* rests upon extensive community input, including an extensive public engagement campaign captioned "Let's Plan Ivins Future Together," a review of previous planning and decision-making in Ivins, the city's historical, natural, and cultural environment, and an analysis of population and economic data and projections.

Public Engagement



Unity Park cookout, April 2022

- In January 2022, the City began a comprehensive review of the Plan, conducting three Town Hall Meetings at City Hall.
- In April 2022, community cookouts were held at Unity Park, Fire Lake Park and Heritage Park to actively gather resident input regarding the future.
- In October 2022 the "Let's Plan Ivins Future Together" campaign got underway with three town meetings facilitated by Judy Gubler, our former City Manager.

General Plan Resident Survey

- The General Plan Resident Survey was conducted in November 2022. It was mailed to all Ivins households to get their opinions on issues facing the city and to understand what is most important to Ivins residents. 2,244 households completed the survey, a 52.7% response rate.
- The survey results were presented at three community meetings in January 2023.

"Talk Abouts"

- A series of panel discussions during 2023 called "Talk Abouts" focused on diverse and specific issues affecting the community. Those forums got resident feedback to help shape the community's vision.

Planning Commission

- Throughout 2022 and 2023, the Planning Commission worked on their plan updates.
- After a Public Hearing, the Planning Commission completed its work and delivered its recommendations to the City Council in November of 2023.

The City Council held numerous work meetings focusing on the General Plan and addressed it on multiple City Council Meeting agendas. After a Public Hearing, the City Council adopted the General Plan on _____2024.

Supporting City Documents

- General Plan Resident Survey Report (December 2022) *** need link
- General Plan Resident Survey Comments (December 2022) *** need link



Word Cloud from the Survey

5: VISION

From its humble beginning as a cluster of small farms, Ivins slowly grew into a quiet bedroom community attracting families and retirees alike to its serene and naturally beautiful environment. More recently resorts and arts venues have come capitalizing on those same qualities to attract millions of visitors.

Centuries ago, its indigenous inhabitants recognized the beauty and spiritual quality of this land, and we respect and protect it still. Our careful planning will:

- retain these cherished attributes for future generations by protecting our red mountain vistas, our expansive lava beds and other sensitive lands, and our night sky;
- maintain a general sense of peacefulness, security and belonging that fosters neighborliness and community involvement by using broad communication tools and providing effective Public Safety services;
- preserve our rural flavor through the conservation of open space and agricultural pockets;
- prepare for population growth by accommodating a wide variety of circumstances through appropriate zoning, development regulations and design guidelines;
- anticipate the future needs of the city by encouraging and carefully locating appropriate commercial development;
- conserve water and other resources in this desert environment by implementing effective conservation policies and programs;
- expand recreational opportunities by further developing trail systems, park properties and recreation programs;
- acknowledge the arts as an important component of our local culture and advance them by supporting local arts organizations and promoting public art.

We recognize that we are only the most recent in a long line of stewards over this precious land. We commit ourselves to its preservation by honoring those who came before whose sacrifice and hard work produced what we now have and by respecting those who will come after us who deserve our best efforts to advance the legacy of the past.

6: GUIDING PRINCIPLES: ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

In determining the future of Ivins, we need to address some key questions. How do we want to grow? What impact will growth have on Ivins? Will growth bring more jobs or recreational options? Will growth jeopardize our rural atmosphere and open spaces? How does growth affect housing affordability?

The values outlined in the vision statement form the foundation of this General Plan. They are not to be overlooked even when market forces, cost considerations, or other development pressures are applied. Staying true to these values is the only way to preserve the city's magnificent natural environment and desirable lifestyle. This may result in more comprehensive ordinances than is typical elsewhere. However, the significance they create for Ivins residents in preserving the character of the community and residents' quality of life is greater than any future development that would attempt to ignore them.

Guiding Principles

1. **Provide effective government to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of residents.**
   - Conduct an annual evaluation with the City Council and Police and Fire departments to ensure appropriate public safety services are meeting state and national standards.
   - Provide annual updates to residents that the infrastructure of public facilities, services, and utilities are meeting current state and national needs for the present and the future.
2. **Provide reliable essential services including water, sewer, storm drains, and roads.**
   - Carefully manage, plan, and budget for future new and replacement infrastructure needs.
   - Structure rates to cover the cost of services as economically as possible.
3. **Ensure that all aspects of governance and policy-making respect individual rights.**
   - Govern carefully to safeguard the rights and opportunities of all residents.
4. **Maintain an efficient budget process to manage growth without leaving a legacy of debt.**
   - Attract commercial opportunities that are sustainable long-term, protect our quality of life, provide employment opportunities for residents and enhance the tax base.
   - Ensure our residents and community tax dollars are used with fiscal responsibility.
5. **Foster growth that will improve the character of the community and residents' quality of life.**
   - Consider the long-term consequences of decision-making to ensure responsible growth.
   - Provide opportunities and affordability for future generations to live here.
6. **Preserve and protect the resources, natural beauty and uniqueness of Ivins.**
   - Work with the Washington County Water Conservancy District and others to create a plan reviewed annually that will provide safe, dependable water to meet our future needs.
   - Secure and maintain open space when fiscally possible.
7. **Offer enrichment experiences through outdoor recreation, the arts and other cultural assets.**
   - Engage residents through volunteer programs and community events.
   - Continue to evaluate, develop and maintain our parks and trails for access and safety.