12. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tourism is quickly becoming the main economic engine for Ivins. This is partly due to the City Council emphasizing it in the past two General Plan updates. It started decades ago with Red Mountain Resort, the Tuacahn Center for the Arts, and the Coyote Culch Art Village. They were followed by Movara Fitness Resort and Crescent Moon Inn.

Commercial development has taken place mostly along Snow Canyon Parkway, Center Street, Red Mountain Blvd., and in the Kayenta Art Village. The City's magnificent setting has attracted a variety of unique independent businesses, world-class resorts, Rocky Vista University, and the Southern Utah Veterans Home. These add to the City's unique character and identity.

By the end of 2023, the city had just under 200 tourist accommodations. Currently 1,100+ units are under construction at Black Desert Resort and 126 RV pads and units at Hidden Springs RV Resort. Other projects are planned, including the Retreat at Snow Canyon, Sentierre, an expansion of Red Mountain Resort, and a resort near the Kayenta Art Village. All this development will bring the number of tourist accommodations up to at least 2,200 units and possibly as many as 3,000 units.

Ivins residents have made it clear that the City has attracted enough tourism development. They are also not excited about adding much more conventional commercial development either. tAt the same time, residents look to the City to provide more services and amenities. That comes at a significant cost. Increasing the commercial tax base will help accomplish those goals and minimize their budgetary



Black Desert Resort

impact on residents. The key is to do it in a way that creates more positive outcomes than negative ones. This can be done by creating an environment in which businesses can thrive.

In addition to being a small city, there are additional barriers to commercial development in Ivins, but also opportunities.

- The City's location on the outskirts of the greater St. George metropolitan area isn't ideal for businesses that need to be more centrally located. However, it is ideal for businesses looking for a special place rather than locating in "anywhere, USA."
- Ivins does not have a central business district. However, there is at least one central undeveloped commercial parcel to create such a district on a scale and in a style that fits the community.
- The City's desire to maintain its pristine environment and high quality of life by limiting lighting, noise, signage, and even the types of businesses reduce its commercial appeal for some businesses. But others will find the opportunity to create a unique identity appealing.

Growing sales and room tax revenue from businesses relieve the pressure of property taxes and lets tourists help pay for essential city services. The community also benefits from the services these businesses provide, particularly restaurants, which would not normally be economically viable in Ivins.

Impacts from commercial activities can negatively influence the quality of life for residents. Traffic congestion will increase because of all the resort development. Noise from commercial operations, particularly in the late evening or early morning hours, can disturb the peace and quiet of residential areas.

Concentrating new commercial development next to existing commercial areas away from residential neighborhoods can mitigate these problems. So can fronting commercial development on major roadways that bypass residential streets. Additionally, an oversaturation of businesses will detract from the small-town character. So, it is critical that the General Plan includes action steps and policies to reduce these negative impacts.

Insert Graphic showing increase in commercial space

(or developed acres) and projection

Community Preferences

Households responding to the General Plan Resident Survey told us:

- Only 33% want the City to encourage more commercial and retail development or create a downtown city center with commercial development and open space.
- The only types of businesses most respondents were in favor of were restaurants (66% in favor) and small independent businesses (54% in favor).
- On the other side, 64% did not want fast food restaurants, 75% did not want chain stores, and over 80% did not want any more transient housing of any type.

Goal

Support small, independent businesses that are unique to Ivins. Continue to promote our small-town character and provide amenities and services that enhance the quality of life for residents.

Action Plan

- Review the City Code to ensure our ordinances promote the city's small-town character in areas zoned for commercial development. These ordinances shall, in most instances, require more modest-scale buildings. In all cases their architecture must be complementary to their surroundings and considerate of important viewsheds.
- Develop strategies to help tourism in Ivins contribute to the community (with more than tax revenue) rather than just consuming resources.
- Consider implementing the "resort community tax," an additional sales tax allowed if the transient room capacity is greater than or equal to 66% of the permanent census population.
- Consider creating more flexible home occupation ordinances to reflect work-from-home trends.

Economic Development Policies

- Seek events that don't merely draw additional visitors to the City, but rather events that will enhance the character of the community.
- Attract businesses that will provide employment opportunities for Ivins residents and enhance its tax base.
- Attract businesses that reflect and support our community values and quality of life.
- Support developing pedestrian-oriented commercial centers on Snow Canyon Parkway and elsewhere.
- Do not allow strip commercial development.
- Work to create and maintain healthy, vibrant core retail areas that will provide convenient shopping and promote a walkable community.
- Discourage businesses that increase noise, light, or air pollution or are not water efficient.