11. LAND USE

Land Use is one of the most essential elements of the General Plan and is required by state law. This portion of the Plan will describe how we currently use the land and how we will use it in the future.

Ivins' unique character is defined by its picturesque setting at the base of Red Mountain, its mix of agricultural lands, low-density residential areas, limited commercial spaces, and the restrained size, scale, and density of its built environment. Together, these elements create Ivins' distinct charm and appeal. Preserving this unique character is critical for maintaining a high quality of life for residents, providing an enjoyable experience for visitors, and enhancing the economic viability of local businesses.

However, much of Ivins's open and agricultural land has development potential and existing development rights under the current land use ordinance. The City recognizes that these areas will likely be developed in the future. Additionally, existing developed properties will eventually be redeveloped as current structures become obsolete or require upgrades.

The Land Use Plan in this General Plan (Appendix A) is intended to be a guide for new development and redevelopment. The Plan establishes a vision for future development that, if achieved, will preserve the unique character of Ivins.

Existing Conditions

Current zoning allows for a mix of land uses, including low-density residential, high-density residential, high-density, low-density residential, and commercial uses. Buildings are typically modest in height. Residential building heights are limited to 25 feet, but there are homes built before that requirement that are as tall as 35 feet. Commercial building heights are capped at 35 feet.

Our ordinances are designed to ensure that properties are situated strategically to preserve views. Existing buildings in Ivins exhibit a diversity of architectural styles, yet the City’s design standards help promote a somewhat consistent look.

Ivins is committed to protecting the dark night sky. The City was an early adopter of outdoor lighting standards that help limit light pollution, light trespass, glare, and nuisance lighting, enhancing the scenic quality of the dark night sky.

The Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan in this General Plan (Appendix A) is intended to be a guide for new development and redevelopment. The Plan establishes a vision for future development that, if achieved, will preserve the unique character of Ivins. It should be used to ensure that new development and redevelopment are consistent with the Land Use Plan. Additionally, the Plan should help developers understand what types of development are appropriate for different properties. By referencing the Plan in development discussions, the City can help ensure that a consistent and community-supported pattern of growth is achieved.

Sensitive Lands Committee

Ivins has a Sensitive Land Committee, which includes City staff and public members. The committee reviews proposed developments to determine if sensitive lands, such as steep slopes, hillsides, lava fields, wetlands, and stormwater courses, will be impacted and how to mitigate such impacts.

Hillsides & Geologic Hazard Areas

Hillsides and geologic features are important components of the city's physiography. Many of the hillsides that frame the north and south sides of Ivins contain steep slopes, which present several challenging problems when disturbed: rockfall, scarring, slope failure, erosion, stormwater control, and vehicular access.

Geological conditions of greatest significance include unstable slopes on steep hillsides, moderate earthquake hazards, high groundwater in low-lying areas resulting in instability and possible alkali staining, and collapsible and expansive soils that may pose hazards to building structures.

Dry Washes

Throughout Ivins, dry washes provide a natural storm drainage system, carrying stormwater to the Santa Clara River. They also serve as important visual open spaces, wildlife habitats, and recreation corridors. The most extensive drainage washes are Dry Wash and Padre Canyon Wash. All washes should be maintained in a natural state whenever possible.

Dry washes left in their natural state will migrate their positions over time as different sizes of floods create new drainage patterns. When development is adjacent to a natural dry wash, consideration of this fact needs to be addressed with channel armoring.

Supporting City Documents

- Ivins City Code
- City Maps (Land Use, Zoning, sensitive Lands, Transportation, Parks & Trails):

Community Preferences

Households responding to the General Plan Survey showed that only 35% of the respondents were satisfied with the city's overall development.

Goals

- Manage the type, size, scale, density, and appearance of new development to enhance the unique character of Ivins, preserve views, reduce impacts on existing residents and businesses, and protect the night sky and our natural and cultural resources.
- Use zoning and land use regulation strategically to ensure that the new development's style, pace, and intensity do not detract from the City's unique character.
- Improve the appearance of the public street right-of-way and other public properties to promote the city's unique character and enhance the community's aesthetics.

Obstacles

- Resident resistance to higher density zoning.
- State Legislature usurping local land use authority.
- Reconciliation of market-driven housing needs and affordability issues with City ordinances.
- Availability of water.

Action Plan

- Encourage commercial development that meets the needs of residents and visitors.
- Update the City's ordinances to ensure they achieve the goals stated in this General Plan.
- Develop policies and ordinances to ensure residential areas will enjoy peace and privacy as commercial properties are developed and to mitigate the impact of existing commercial uses (noise, traffic, lighting, etc.) on residential areas.
- Consider increasing the setback distances required for commercial uses that could have detrimental impacts of noise or loss of privacy on adjacent residential parcels.
- Revise the land use regulations to ensure that transient lodging of any type will be limited to only those parcels that currently allow such use.
- Develop a plan to identify parcels of property that are important to preserve. These properties could be visually significant parcels, large pastures or fields that reflect the city's agricultural heritage, important wildlife corridors, and other habitat spaces, or any other properties that will enhance the unique character of Ivins.
- Develop strategies to acquire the properties identified in the plan described above. These strategies could include obtaining funding to purchase the properties, working with conservation groups to acquire conservation easements, or using land use tools such as Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs).

Land Use Policies

- Staff will carefully monitor new development during construction to ensure it complies with all regulations and standards to reduce negative impacts on existing residents.
- Staff will closely monitor all grading and excavation activities to ensure they are done in accordance with approved plans to minimize scarring of land and blowing dirt.
- Require enhanced screening and buffering on commercial properties adjacent to residential uses as a condition of approval for new commercial development.
- Maintain a strong sense of place. Protect the quality of life. Work to preserve the natural beauty and vistas that give Ivins City its unique identity, including Red Mountain and the other natural hillsides surrounding the city, the washes, the lava beds, open spaces, and the night sky.
- Foster orderly growth compatible with the community's character and surrounding natural beauty. Encourage functional neighborhoods with various housing types that meet the financial and aesthetic needs of a broad cross-section of residents.
- Encourage functional neighborhoods with a variety of housing types that meet both the financial and aesthetic needs of a broad cross-section of residents.

- Areas that contain designated open space, parks, or other scenic/natural resources should be developed with clustering/buffering to preserve the desired resource(s) and overall net density shown on the Land Use Element.
- Ensure buffering of commercial development from existing residential development.
- Incentivize developers to provide open spaces within neighborhoods to offer outdoor living experiences for the community.
- Encourage housing that faces onto existing city streets other than major and minor collector roads, reducing the increase in walled-in exclusive neighborhoods that diminish the overall sense of community
- Incentivize traditional neighborhood development that varies lot and home sizes to include a cross-section of economic and family situations, reducing the exclusivity of current development types and building a greater overall sense of community.
- Encourage the preservation of open space.
- Through growth, land use, and development, provide for the distribution of neighborhood densities across Ivins City.
- Create pedestrian-oriented developments, including paths and systems of open spaces that connect with community trails, to encourage community residents to socialize.
- Promote a system of open spaces distributed within the neighborhoods to create a sense of connection with other residents and the environment.

Hillsides & Geologic Hazard Area Policies

- Where hillsides are under private ownership and development rights exist, discourage development on hillsides through measures such as zoning, density transfer, and acquisition/dedication. Where hillside excavation cannot be avoided, cuts are to be full, reclaimed to a natural appearance, landscaped, or screened from a general view.
- Public lands and safety must be preserved by ensuring stability is properly and correctly maintained on any development of hillsides and/or slopes.
- In all development, problem soils must be appropriately identified and mitigated.
- All proposals for building sites must include a geologic/soils report addressing specific conditions of the site.

Dry Wash Policies

- Dry Wash and Padre Canyon Wash should be preserved in a natural condition except for flood prevention, detention, or water conservation.
- Wherever feasible, smaller washes shall be preserved in their natural state.
- Tamarisks (salt cedars) should be removed from dry washes, and native plants re-introduced.