

4 VISION AND GOALS

The Objective of the General Plan is to guide development, and re-development, in a manner that will enhance St. George as an attractive, diverse, convenient and sustainable place to live, work and visit while preserving the City's unique community character.

4.1 UPDATING OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The following Vision statements were derived from broad public input. They are accompanied by observations about the current status of achieving the Vision.

<i>VISION</i>	<i>STATUS</i>
<p>1. A city with aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods and with neighborhood-scale commercial centers dispersed throughout the city. A pedestrian-friendly city where one can easily walk for recreation and to neighborhood destinations (school, church, store).</p>	<p><i>Many neighborhoods presently are not within walking proximity to neighborhood commercial centers and must rely on automobiles. New neighborhood convenience centers are proposed in many areas.</i></p>
<p>2. A city with ample open space, such as along the Virgin and Santa Clara Rivers, along major drainage washes, the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve habitat area, Webb Hill and other environmentally sensitive areas.</p>	<p><i>Open space still exists in and around the city. However, much open space is under development pressure, including public land, hillside areas and agricultural lands.</i></p>
<p>3. The hillsides that form the backdrop to the City, both the Black and Red Hills, retain their character and remain mostly undeveloped; and where the hillsides are developed, the hillside scars are reclaimed to a natural condition or are hidden from public view by buildings.</p>	<p><i>There are several existing highly visible scars on the hillsides that form the backdrop of our community. Although the shock of those scars has receded, they still greatly mar the image and beauty of St. George. The Hillside Ordinance and Hillside Review Board have helped prevent or reduce scars from new development. In spite of the City's hillside regulations however, the lower portions of many hills (i.e. up to 40% slopes) are still susceptible to future development unless the standards are strengthened.</i></p>
<p>Neighborhood parks are conveniently located throughout the City and a hike and bike trail network connects residential areas with major parks using river and wash corridors as well as designated street rights-of-way.</p>	<p><i>Many new parks and many miles of trailways have been added via 1996 Parks and Recreation bond issue. Trails are planned along both the Virgin and Santa Clara Rivers and along major washes.</i></p>

<i>VISION</i>	<i>STATUS</i>
4. An efficient, multi-modal transportation system provides easy access throughout the City. Buses, cars and bicycles are all well-used forms of transportation.	<i>A limited bus transit system was implemented in 2000. Public transit demand will grow as the population base increases.</i>
5. The City is a regional center for shopping, recreation, health care, entertainment, government and other services.	<i>The city continues to be the general service center for the region. However, new commercial centers are being developed in surrounding communities, including 'big box' stores and centers that will present strong competition to older St. George commercial centers.</i>
6. The City has maintained and enhanced its ties to its pioneer heritage by preserving key historical buildings and promoting a remembrance of their struggles to settle the area.	<i>Renovation of historical buildings such as the Woodward School continues. Older downtown storefronts also continue to be renovated.</i>
7. A city with shade trees lining all streets and with well-landscaped commercial centers.	<i>The city's Urban Forestry Program has made a significant impact on streetscapes and needs to be expanded. The high cost of new infrastructure that will be required for water delivery to keep pace with development strongly suggests that the city as a whole needs to adopt xeriscape (low water use for landscaping) principles.</i>
8. A city that is relatively crime-free and where one can walk anywhere safely after dark.	<i>The city continues to have a relatively low crime rate. Wide streets promote (allow) relatively high vehicle speeds. Private streets still need appropriate lighting.</i>
9. A city with a diverse tax base providing residents with skilled, higher-paying job opportunities.	<i>The local economy is becoming increasingly diverse, and the average wage has increased in 2000. New industrial parks have recently been developed.</i>
10. A city where growth is well-managed and new development does not exceed the capacity of public facilities and services.	<i>The General Plan is used to guide community development. In the short term, new growth will approach or exceed available water and power resources.</i>
11. A city that cherishes its clean air and takes appropriate steps to protect it.	

4.2 THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GENERAL PLAN

Mission Statement, may be updated by the Council at any time, and will also be reviewed during the next update of the General Plan.

In St. George a variety of decisions are made every week concerning roads, sewers, parks, schools, new subdivisions, commercial developments and much more. Individually the decisions may not seem related; however, the cumulative effect of such decisions has a significant impact on the community and the residents' quality of life. Clearly defined goals and objectives provide a means by which a government can focus these many individual actions for the good of the community.

As an aid to achieving the community vision described above, that vision has been translated into a series of Goals and Objectives. The Goals are written as general statements that address individual subject areas. Each Goal has supporting Objectives that are more specific aspects of the Goal. For each Objective potential directions (actions) are suggested to implement the Objective. At the conclusion of this document, the Objectives are translated into policies and specific actions for implementation by the City staff, Planning Commission and City Council.

This process is intended to bring the community's broad vision down to specific, implementable actions. Since they are part of the General Plan, the Vision, Goals, Objectives, Policies and Actions have been adopted by the City Council, and have official status as a guide to how the City intends to direct its energies and resources with respect to the many issues facing the community.

It is anticipated that as time passes and conditions change there will be a need to modify the Goals,

4.2.1 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Thus, the planning process is one of continually monitoring results and evaluating the relevance of the direction. The Goals and Objectives, even the

4.3 GOALS AND SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES

GOAL I. NATURAL SETTING

Preserve the natural beauty and features that provide a healthy environment and give St. George its unique identity, such as:

- ❖ the Red Cliffs and other natural hillsides that enclose the City and provide a striking red, and green, backdrop;
- ❖ the rivers and streams and their riparian wetlands that provide important wildlife habitats and scenery;
- ❖ open space to define the limits of the City, separate it from surrounding urbanization and provide it with a unique sense of identity.

The natural terrain, drainage and vegetation of St. George should be preserved with superior examples contained within parks or greenbelts.

<i>NATURAL SETTING — SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES</i>	<i>POTENTIAL DIRECTIONS</i>
A. Protect scenic vistas and visual quality of the I-15 City entries.	<i>The City is making progress, as evidenced by attractive new landscapes at several I-15 exits.</i>
B. Provide zoning incentives for preserving open space. Zoning incentives should promote preservation of steep slopes (i.e. above 15%) and flood plains.	<i>The only existing clustering incentive is a provision to allow a landowner to transfer homes out of the floodplain, or onto less steep land. Greater incentives are needed.</i>
C. Pursue public acquisition of open space.	<i>The City needs a detailed open space plan to provide specific direction and strategies to protect important natural areas (dry washes, riparian areas, scenic hillsides, wildlife habitats, etc.).</i>
D. Assure that new development does its part to protect our natural resources.	<i>The hillside regulations restrict development on steep slopes but still allow visual impacts on highly visible hillsides with slopes less than 40%. Review and strengthen the hillside regulations.</i>
E. Rehabilitate highly visible natural areas (i.e. hillsides and washes) that have been scarred or otherwise degraded by improper excavation.	<i>Repairing the scar on the hillside above the airport should be a high priority.</i>

GOAL II. ECONOMY

Sustain a strong, diverse local economy to provide employment opportunities for St. George's residents.

<i>ECONOMY — SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES</i>	<i>POTENTIAL DIRECTIONS</i>
A. Revitalize the downtown area into a regional center for banking, offices, government and specialty commercial.	<i>There are many underutilized properties in the downtown. To accomplish this objective there is a need to adjust downtown zoning to allow higher density offices, commercial and residential (primarily outside of the Historic District), and to create a pedestrian-friendly, attractive downtown streetscape.</i>
B. Support locally-owned businesses.	<i>The City can help create attractive public spaces for commerce and business. In the long run, locally owned businesses will survive by focusing on niche markets, providing extraordinary service, and reinvesting to keep pace with competition.</i>
C. Attract industries that will need a skilled labor pool and will raise the local wage rate.	<i>Businesses typically follow the labor supply, not lead it. City efforts to provide affordable housing, college expansion, and incentives for specialty industries (medical for example) are all actions that will help attract residents that will attract business.</i>
D. Attract clean, non-polluting industries.	<i>A combination strategy will be required: creating incentives to attract clean industry (working closely with Economic Development) and establishing tough standards to discourage polluting industries.</i>

GOAL III. SMART GROWTH

Foster orderly urban growth in ways that encourage efficient use of land (avoid urban sprawl), cost-effective provision of urban services and that results in a livable, attractive community.

GROWTH — SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES	POTENTIAL DIRECTIONS
A. Assure that growth occurs at a pace, and in areas, that can be reasonably sustained by City services and facilities and therefore does not place an inequitable financial burden on existing residents.	<i>Establish a logical and efficient phasing policy to assure that the City can afford to install and/or maintain new infrastructure.</i>
B. Identify growth areas that are accessible and cost-effective for St. George.	<i>Work with adjacent communities through the Metropolitan Planning Organization to establish logical growth boundaries. The Washington County Coordination Plan is a good starting point for regional coordination and determination of annexation areas.</i>
C. Assure that development takes place only with the presence of adequate public facilities to serve the development.	<i>Apply the City’s Concurrency policy consistently.</i>
D. Assure that new development is organized as neighborhoods, and is integrated with the existing neighborhoods. Where noncontiguous new development is justified, make sure it is self-sufficient, with jobs, housing, and shopping (not as ‘bedroom suburbs’) similar to Green Valley, for example.	<i>This goal would suggest new language for the subdivision regulations to discourage sprawl and “leap frog” development that results in separate “enclaves” that are not connected to adjacent development.</i>
E. Encourage existing development to become increasingly self-sufficient with shopping, work places, schools, parks and other facilities within easy walking distance of homes.	<i>This can be achieved by adopting zoning language that allows/encourages a mix of uses within categories. For example, the downtown Commercial zone could be amended to allow (or provide incentives to encourage) residential housing (such as apartments above shops) to provide housing opportunities for elderly who wish to remain independent and be able to walk to restaurants, movies and shopping even as they become less mobile.</i>

<p>F. Encourage neighborhoods that allow residents to remain in the neighborhood even as their life stages change (single, married, raising children, ‘empty nesters’, retirees).</p>	<p><i>Create zoning that allows a variety of residential types (single family, townhouses, apartments).</i></p>
<p>G. Promote the preservation and renovation of historic buildings throughout the City.</p>	<p>The concentration of historic buildings is one of the unique assets of St. George vis-à-vis other communities in the region. They add character, grace and timelessness to the downtown. Needed is an urban design plan for the downtown would be a helpful tool to show how the massing of new buildings could preserve a viable setting for the historic building.</p>
<p>H. Preserve farmland and open pastures that recall the agricultural heritage of St. George.</p>	<p><i>It will be difficult to preserve farms unless they are economically viable. The City’s most realistic strategy will be to protect the “right-to-farm” for as long as owners wish to farm.</i></p>
<p>I. The design of subdivisions as well as individual buildings is functional, attractive, and preserves the City's quality of life.</p>	<p><i>The City has adopted design guidelines in the Community Design Manual, but they need to be utilized more extensively and consistently.</i></p>

GOAL IV. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Provide a variety of housing types in attractive, functional neighborhoods, to meet the needs of all income levels.

RESIDENTIAL — SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES	POTENTIAL DIRECTIONS
<p>A. Support the development and provision of homes priced and sized to meet the needs of all community residents and workers, including low and moderate income, large families, handicapped, families with single heads of household and the elderly.</p>	<p><i>Fortunately, housing (such as for schoolteachers, clerks and police officers) is currently more affordable in St. George than in many other Western cities. However, the trend toward less and less affordability will grow. The City needs to take action now to refine its affordable housing strategy to assure a supply of affordable housing in the future.</i></p>
<p>B. To match job opportunities and to avoid concentrations of poverty, affordable housing should be distributed throughout the community in a way that allows it to blend inconspicuously with the surrounding neighborhood.</p>	<p><i>In the early years of many Utah cities, including St. George, affordable housing was mixed inconspicuously throughout the community. Allowing, encouraging, or even requiring a mix of home sizes and types within a neighborhood will</i></p>

	<i>restore much of the diversity that contributed to St. George’s vitality.</i>
C. Preserve areas for a rural lifestyle (very large lots, horse pastures, “ranchettes”) that are consistent with the local heritage.	These kinds of areas are usually preserved by consensus of the landowners in an area. Once designated, the City should resist piecemeal density increases, changing the zoning only with a consensus of the landowners of the whole sub area.
D. Maintain an overall gross density (for residential development) in St. George at 3 to 4 units/acre.	<i>St. George is currently a moderately low-density community (Las Vegas has a higher density, Hurricane has a lower one). However, to maintain this low density uniformly across each new development will lead to higher costs to extend and maintain infrastructure (e.g. fewer houses per mile of road). Therefore, while maintaining the current overall density, the City can encourage compact development interspersed with open space. This strategy will preserve lower overall densities, yet bring about compact development and lower costs for infrastructure. Clustering and compact development should be encouraged even more than they have been in the past.</i>

GOAL V. TRANSPORTATION

Encourage land use configurations that will reinforce safe, efficient transportation system in and through St. George.

<i>TRANSPORTATION — SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES</i>	<i>POTENTIAL DIRECTIONS</i>
A. Make sure that new development preserves the rights-of-way that will be needed to accommodate future traffic needs.	<i>Rights-of-way for potential new roads are shown on the General Plan. They should be no larger than needed to flexibly accommodate future needs. Discourage the use of private streets where connectivity will be impaired.</i>
B. Assure that vehicle travel through neighborhoods will be at slow, safe speeds.	<i>Modify street standards to allow:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets narrow enough to cause a reduction in traffic speeds, but which accommodate public safety needs; • Traffic-calming devices on existing streets

GOAL VI. RECREATION

Assure that adequate land is set aside in appropriate locations, to provide a wide range of recreational opportunities, for all ages, in an aesthetically pleasing setting.

RECREATION — SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES	POTENTIAL DIRECTIONS
<p>A. The Land Use Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan are consistent, and that together they provide adequate parkland, in appropriate locations to equitably serve all residents. In new subdivisions there is an ample supply of parks (active and passive) whose design and placement encourages frequent use, and presence of people at all hours of the day.</p>	<p><i>The Parks Master Plan has been incorporated into the General Plan. However, currently, park impact fees do not cover the full cost associated with neighborhood parks for new development. This requires that existing development subsidize each new neighborhood park.</i></p>
<p>B. Utilize river corridors as linear greenway passive recreation areas.</p>	

GOAL VII. WATER, POWER AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

Ensure that water, power, and other public facilities and services are adequate to meet the needs of present and future residents of St. George.

WATER, POWER AND PUBLIC SERVICES — SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES	POTENTIAL DIRECTIONS
<p>A. Bring about community development practices that conserve and efficiently use water and power to maximize the use and benefit of this scarce resource.</p>	<p><i>Assure that land development makes highly efficient use of utilities, including water and power, both quantities and distribution. If necessary, phase new development in concert with cost-effective utility extensions.</i></p> <p><i>The Community Design Manual provides general guidance regarding xeriscape, the General Plan encourages development patterns that conserve water and power resources (cluster development, xeriscape, etc.). However, experience has shown that much more needs to be done to educate the public as to the issues and future conditions.</i></p>

<p>B. Assure that the planning and development review process fairly allocates, and assesses the cost of, the utilities and services that will be required to serve existing and new development.</p>	<p><i>The City has adopted Impact Fees that attempt to assess new development for the cost of mitigating the infrastructure costs related to that development. These costs change from time to time and the impacts fees need to be reviewed to assure that they reflect the true cost of development.</i></p>
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GOAL IX. EDUCATION

Assure that sound land use planning helps bring about convenient and affordable school sites.

<i>EDUCATION — SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES</i>	<i>POTENTIAL DIRECTIONS</i>
<p>A. School sites are located well in advance of development, and set aside at reasonable land costs, so that the school district is not forced to “leap frog” out to obtain cheap land, and thus stimulate sprawl development.</p>	<p><i>Designate school sites in General Plan as well as in Washington County Coordination Plan. Develop a purchase or reimbursement plan that will provide reasonably priced land to the school district.</i></p>
<p>B. School facilities are jointly utilized, and financially supported, to minimize costs to the public (City, School District and College).</p>	<p><i>Incorporate school sites in Parks Master Plan.</i></p>