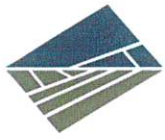


ELK RIDGE CITY, UTAH

General Plan + Code Compliance Evaluation, February 2023

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENT	REVIEW	COMMENTS
Current General Plan (10-9a-401)		
Transportation (10-9a-403(2)(a)(ii))		
Affordable Housing (10-9a-408)		Recommend that they comply with statute (bc of growth rate)
Land Use (10-9a-403(2)(a)(i))		
Current official map (10-9a-401, -407, 10-9a-103(45))		
Current zoning ordinance (10-9a-502)		
Current zoning map (10-9a-502, -505)		
Agriculture/Industrial protection area (10-9a-403(2)(d))		The City needs to contact the Utah Dept of Ag for this.
Capital improvements plan (aligned to GP 10-9a-406)	unk	Not available for review
Water use and preservation element (10-9a-403(2)(a)(iv))		There is a "call to action" for water conservation, but analysis needed
Publicly available plans and ordinances		
Implementation steps		The "call to action" format is unique, but seems actionable
REQUIRED ORDINANCES	REVIEW	COMMENTS
Land use codes are written in plain language (10-9a-306)		Many codes seem to have been in place for a decade or more
Adoption of State Construction Code (15a-1-204(8))		
Establishes planning commission (10-9a-301(1)(a))		
Residential facilities for elderly/persons with disabilities (10-9a-516)		
Permits compliant manufactured homes (10-9a-514(3))		
Addresses cell towers (can't prohibit)		10-12-28
Reestablish non-conforming structure after calamity (10-9a-511)		10-13-2002
Permits charter schools (10-9a-305)		
Permits adult-oriented businesses (427 U.S. 50 (1980))	unk	Can't find reference either way
Permits amateur radio antennas (10-9a-515)		
Only regulate federal wetlands (10-9a-521)	n/a	
Doesn't prohibit high tunnels (10-9a-525)		
Doesn't prohibit homeless shelter (10-9a-526)		In definitions, but not in permitted/conditional
ADMINISTRATION + PROCEDURE	REVIEW	COMMENTS
Land use authority (10-9a-103(30))		
Planning commission (10-9a-302)		
Appeal authority (10-9a-701)		Chap 2
Noticing on the Utah Public Notice Website		
Notice provided on local website		



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15 February 2023

RE: INITIAL REVIEW OF ELK RIDGE GENERAL PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to give some input on the Elk Ridge general plan update initiative. The purpose of this letter is to provide some thoughts from our team. We have tried to organize our input into chapters we typically include in planning projects for towns similar to Elk Ridge. We also have developed an “audit” of the City’s current plan (and some of its code) against the minimum state requirements.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT + CHARACTER

- The notes from the planning team are absolutely correct that your updated plan needs socioeconomic data. This needs to come from two sources. We typically include the official Census numbers (from the American Community Survey), but we also qualify them with local data from Realtors, building permit data, utility hookup data, etc.
- We are assuming that the City is going to be conducting a public outreach campaign once a draft starts to come together.
- Even though Elk Ridge is a newer community, we always include a paragraph about beautification and nuisance issues. This will help strengthen the City's ability to conduct code enforcement.

LAND USE

- The text descriptions of the different land use types are well done. One practice we tend to incorporate in our plans is to also include photos of desired development.
- One caution we would provide is to remember that the purpose of the general plan is to lay out a vision of the future. Many communities tend to blur their general plan and their zoning documents. If we were writing this plan, we would probably emphasize the distinctions between the different future land use types (and the characteristics that distinguish those areas) and then refer to “typical zoning”.
- We usually put a copy of the zoning map in the appendix so that readers don't get confused between it and the future land use map. Regardless of where it is placed, we believe it should be labeled something like “zoning map at the time of this plan’s development” just to ensure that the city doesn't inadvertently confuse residents and developers.
- The “sensitive areas map” is excellent and probably just needs a simple update. Definitely continue it in the next plan.
- The formatting of the future land use map is sufficient but could be improved.

- The land use chapter also needs to include a simple statement about “special protection areas” as per (UCA § 10-9a-403(2)(d)).

TRANSPORTATION

- The current draft as a transportation chapter that seems more like a book report of standard transportation issues. Most of that content should probably be summarized and simplified for the general plan, and then standards moved to the subdivision and development codes.
- If the city has a concern with cul-de-sac development, they should state it in the general plan before they try to regulate against it.
- If the City is considering a mixed use zoning strategy in the future, then they will want to include a brief statement regarding shared parking and access management.

HOUSING

- The State Legislature seems to be insistent on requiring cities to have moderate income plans regardless of their current population. Our team always does a formal housing element (using state models) because we are convinced that during the life of the town’s general plan, the legislature will require it of all cities. (see UCA § 10-9a-4).
- One issue that probably deserves its own treatment in your housing chapter is the city's position on accessory dwelling units (ADU). Make sure that it's both internal and external.
- The housing chapter also needs to explain the city's position on very small lot development or tiny home subdivisions. Our firm is finding that cities all across the state are responding to unexpected demand for them.
- We would advise that you also include a simple chart/report on historical building permits.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- There is no one best way to do an economic development chapter in general plan. However, the 2018 plan seems to be missing data on the current situation. When this is done, the City needs to be sure to look closely at its sales tax revenue trends because of the recent legislative change in what cities can expect from point-of-purchase transactions.
- This chapter probably needs some discussion about the city's support for home-based business.

PARKS + RECREATION

- When describing the City’s existing conditions, we typically reference the NRPA standards. Regardless, the City should include a graphic of existing facilities and *potential* new locations.

INFRASTRUCTURE + PUBLIC FACILITIES

- We believe that the infrastructure chapter is critically important in any general plan because of the state requirement that all major Investments are first described in some way in the general plan (see UCA §10-9a-406). However, it should always be remembered that this is a *general* plan. If the city has conducted any master plans or impact fee studies, those documents can provide great summary material that can be included into the general plan.

- The legislature just created a new rule regarding water conservation issues that need to be included in the general plan (UCA § 10-9a-403(2)(a)(iv)). The City will want to incorporate that in their update.
- We suggest that you also include a discussion of public facilities (i.e. city hall) in this chapter.

RISK + RESILIENCE

- This is not a required element, but we believe that they are important issues. The City needs to make a few statements regarding their police and fire levels-of-service and the condition of their facilities (i.e. fire station).
- Content on natural hazards should be drawn from the County's PreDisaster Mitigation Plan. There are also some general reports from FEMA that might need to be reviewed. At a minimum, you'll want to make sure that you outline your wildland urban interface (WUI).

APPENDIXES (and MISC)

- We believe that each element of a general plan should be addressed in four ways: existing conditions, desired future conditions, anticipated changes, and goals and strategies. This isn't a strict prescription, but doing so will help the City establish its rationale for future regulation and investment.
- One of the notes on "General Plan Thoughts" doc was to develop an administrative discipline to review the general plan annually. This is one of our strongest recommendations, and we put it in every plan we've ever done. We take it a little further though, and recommend that each community schedule an annual retreat with the Planning Commission and the City Council to discuss the general plan. We believe that this meeting is most effective if it is held in conjunction with the beginning of the budget development process. At the end of the day, cities need to learn how to differentiate between "strategic investments" and just "budget expenditures".
- The "call to action" element is interesting. We like to see implementable steps included in a general plan, but we caution our clients to be careful not to make too many commitments that the City might not be able to keep (i.e. tying potential actions to dates).
- State statute isn't very clear as to whether a municipality needs to have its annexation policy plan in the general plan or as a standalone document. The one the City has in the 2018 draft is missing a map of anticipated areas and the land uses that potential annexed areas should expect.

Respectfully submitted,



Mike Hansen, Rural Community Consultants