

**Annexation Policy Plan**

# **Elk Ridge City**

**February 2025**



# **Elk Ridge City Annexation Policy Plan**

## **Purpose**

The intent of this Annexation Policy Plan (the “Plan”) is to guide decisions regarding future annexations and ensure alignment with objectives in Elk Ridge City’s (the “City”) General Plan or future General Plans. This plan will identify potential annexation areas and establish specific standards and criteria that will guide the City’s decisions on whether to grant future annexation petitions in those areas. The plan will also help the City prepare for any financial and operational impacts of annexation while striving to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the City’s existing and future residents.

## **Policy**

This Plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of Utah Code §10-2-401.5, which requires all municipalities to adopt an Annexation Policy Plan before annexing an unincorporated area into the City.

### **1. Expansion Area Map**

The City Annexation Area Map, attached as Exhibit 1, illustrates the City’s proposed future expansion areas. This map represents the City’s growth boundaries and includes areas outside, but adjacent to, its incorporated borders, which may be annexed into the City. Proposed annexation areas must fall within the approved Annexation Declaration Area for City consideration. However, although property or properties may be within a designated expansion area, compliance with this plan does not guarantee approval.

### **2. Annexation Criteria**

The following list will guide the City’s decision on whether to grant future annexation requests. All future requests for annexation will be evaluated against the following criteria required by Utah Code §10-2-402:

#### **2.1 General Criteria**

- 2.1.1.** Any annexed area must be a contiguous area.
- 2.1.2.** The City will attempt to avoid gaps between or overlaps with expansion areas other than municipalities.
- 2.1.3.** If the annexation is by petition, the proposed annexation area cannot create an unincorporated island or peninsula unless the City and Utah County agree to such creation.

- 2.1.4.** Annexation requests cannot propose the annexation of all, or part of an area proposed for annexation in a previously filed petition that is still pending approval, denial, or rejection.

### **3. Character of the Community**

In 1968, a land developer named James Winterton purchased a portion of the 1,726-acre Goosenest Ranch from the James Fayette Shuler family. Mr. Winterton submitted a subdivision plat to Utah County under the project name of Salem Hills because of the proximity of the development to the town of Salem. In the fall of 1971, Utah County approved the development, but as a condition of approval, they required the area to incorporate if the population ever exceeded 100 permanent residents. Over time, residential lots were developed. On December 22, 1976, Salem Hills was incorporated. About a year and a half later, in a special election, the residents of the town voted to change the name to Elk Ridge. This name was chosen because of the elk herds that have historically wintered in the vicinity of the town.

By 1980, there were 99 homes built in the town and the population had grown to 381 people. In 1990, the census reported that there were 771 residents living in 167 homes. The growth rate between 1980 and 1990 was a robust 102.36%. The 2000 Census stated the population was 1,838 residents with more than 300 homes, far exceeding any past projections. In 2001, the town of Elk Ridge officially became a city. From 2000 to 2010, the nation saw a roller coaster of economic highs and lows ending in an economic recession with financial impacts not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Utah's population continued to grow mainly due to births during this "lost decade," and Elk Ridge expanded at a modest pace to 2,436 residents and 584 homes. According to the official 2020 US Census the population for Elk Ridge City is 4,907. For future planning, the General Plan is based on the most recent data from the US Census Bureau and the American Community Survey (ACS) update. The 2024 population of Elk Ridge City was 5,033 with 1,273 homes.

In August 2018, the massive Bald Mountain fire impacted everyone in our community by forcing all residents to evacuate for 10 days. No homes/structures were burned, but this raised greater awareness of the need for vigilant fire safety practices and policies. In September 2018, unprecedented torrential rain caused flooding, and debris flows in Loafer Canyon. By using sandbags and other emergency measures, there was minimal damage to homes and property, but this highlighted the need for adequate permanent drainage/flood control measures for vulnerable areas in our city. Consequences of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic included a shift toward more people working from home and families spending more time in our community. The history of the residents of Elk Ridge has always been that of a person whose priority is to live in a place where clean air, open space, and quiet and peaceful surroundings are important. It is a

place, nestled at the base of Mount Loafer, with a panoramic view found nowhere else in Utah County.

Elk Ridge is considered an exurban City. An exurban City is an area outside the typically denser suburban areas, situated in a more rural setting. The City may be near farmland, forested areas, or natural open space but has a denser population than a typical rural area.

Elk Ridge consists of approximately 1,872 acres or 2.84 square miles of land within its current boundary. The annexation planning boundary for Elk Ridge potentially adds an additional 150 acres, for a total build-out potential of 3.10 square miles.

Currently, 940 acres or 50% of the total City acreage is developed or under development with approved lots. A little over 480 undeveloped acres resides in the Critical Environmental (CE-3) and Hillside Residential (HR-1) Zones south of the currently developed neighborhoods. Of the remaining 460 acres, 260 acres are in the CE-2 Zone. The rest of the acreage is mainly located on the fringes of existing development with some smaller areas interspersed throughout the city. As stated above, there are still about 150 acres of land in the annexation declaration. This translates to the possibility of anywhere between 250 to 500 potential new dwellings, which will add approximately 1,000 to 1,500 new people. It is forecasted that Elk Ridge's total population at buildout could be around 6,500 to 7,500 people.

The forecasted population could vary significantly depending on the slope of the land, buildable area, and zoning at the time of annexation. With continued growth, residents have noticed significant changes in the community. To some residents, the community may seem more suburban or exurban as formerly open ground is transformed into neighborhoods. While the pace of growth may slow down in the future, it will continue to transform the character of the community. It is the role of zoning to help preserve the key characteristics of Elk Ridge balanced with private property rights.

#### **4. Municipal Services**

All areas included in the Plan will need municipal services. Annexation will allow residents and developers of annexed property access to culinary water, sewer or septic systems, and electric power services, provided they meet all City specifications and comply with all applicable development ordinances.

#### **5. Extension of Municipal Services**

Where municipal services are not presently extended, services will be extended on an as-needed basis at the cost of the developer. All extensions of municipal services must comply with all

ordinance and policy criteria, and the individual developer or property owner will pay for necessary extensions. The plan and time frame for the extension of municipal services will be determined by the interest of property owners to subdivide and develop their ground and the ability of the City to provide such services. It is in the interest of City residents to foster orderly sequential development.

## **6. Service Financing**

Municipal services in newly annexed areas will be financed and constructed by the developer in addition to the City's collection and investment of impact fees. Through increases in property valuations and subsequent increases in the collection of property and sales taxes, inherent increases to the general fund will help defray added expenses that the City may incur by annexing new properties.

## **7. Estimate of Tax Consequences**

The annexation area within Elk Ridge City's plan is limited to unincorporated Utah County properties. Other taxing entities, including but not limited to schools, county, and water conservancy, already cover the potential annexation area.

Elk Ridge's combined property tax rate for tax year 2023 is 0.009707. Utah County's unincorporated areas' combined tax rate is .009996, which includes the same taxing entities listed above, except for the City, but includes:

- SA-6 Service Area 6 – Law, Zoning
- SA-7 Service Area 7 – Fire Serv
- SA-8 Service Area 8 – Planning

If annexed into the City, residents in an expansion area would recognize a tax rate decrease of .000289. This information is based on the current tax rate of all applicable taxing entities and recognizes that any of the respective taxing entities may adjust tax rates as necessary.

## **8. Interests of Affected Entities**

In evaluating a proposed annexation, the interests of all affected entities should be considered. The annexation should not extend beyond the limits of the adopted annexation policy plan. Other services needed for the annexation, e.g., electrical, power, internet, and communications, should be available or reasonably available for the proposed annexation. The petitioners of annexation will need to have entered into agreement(s) with affected entities, as applicable, for the provision of required infrastructure and services. The annexation cannot create boundary alignment issues with any public or charter schools, or affected entities, unless interlocal agreements have been created to address the alignment issues.

## 9. Other Considerations

### 9.1. Attempt to avoid gaps between or overlaps with the expansion areas of other municipalities.

Elk Ridge's proposed expansion area simply seeks to extend the City's boundary to allow for natural expansion of the City's borders.

### 9.2. Consideration of population growth projections for the City and adjoining areas for the next 20 years.

Due to the vacant land in the southern part of Utah County, population projections from the Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) are as follows:

City	2020 Census	2030	2040	2050
Elk Ridge	4,687	5,421	5,614	5,841
Payson	21,101	27,598	38,838	60,188
Salem	9,298	19,819	33,511	46,331
Woodland Hills	1,521	1,907	2,148	2,467
Utah County	659,392	853,711	1,021,077	1,185,679

### 9.3. Consideration of current and project costs of infrastructure, urban services, and public facilities necessary to facilitate full development of the area within the City; and to expand infrastructure, services, and facilities into the area being considered for inclusion in the expansion area.

The projected infrastructure costs are estimated to be millions of dollars to service the area identified in the annexation declaration map for potential installation of water, road, and storm drainage needs.

### 9.4. Consideration, in conjunction with the General Plan, the need over the next 20 years for additional land suitable for residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Elk Ridge anticipates annexation petitions to facilitate potential residential, commercial, and industrial development. Upon receiving an annexation petition, the City will review each request for (1) compliance with the Annexation Policy Plan and (2) opportunities to implement the adopted goals and objectives of the General Plan.

### 9.5. Consideration for agricultural lands, forests, recreational areas, and wildlife management areas in the City.

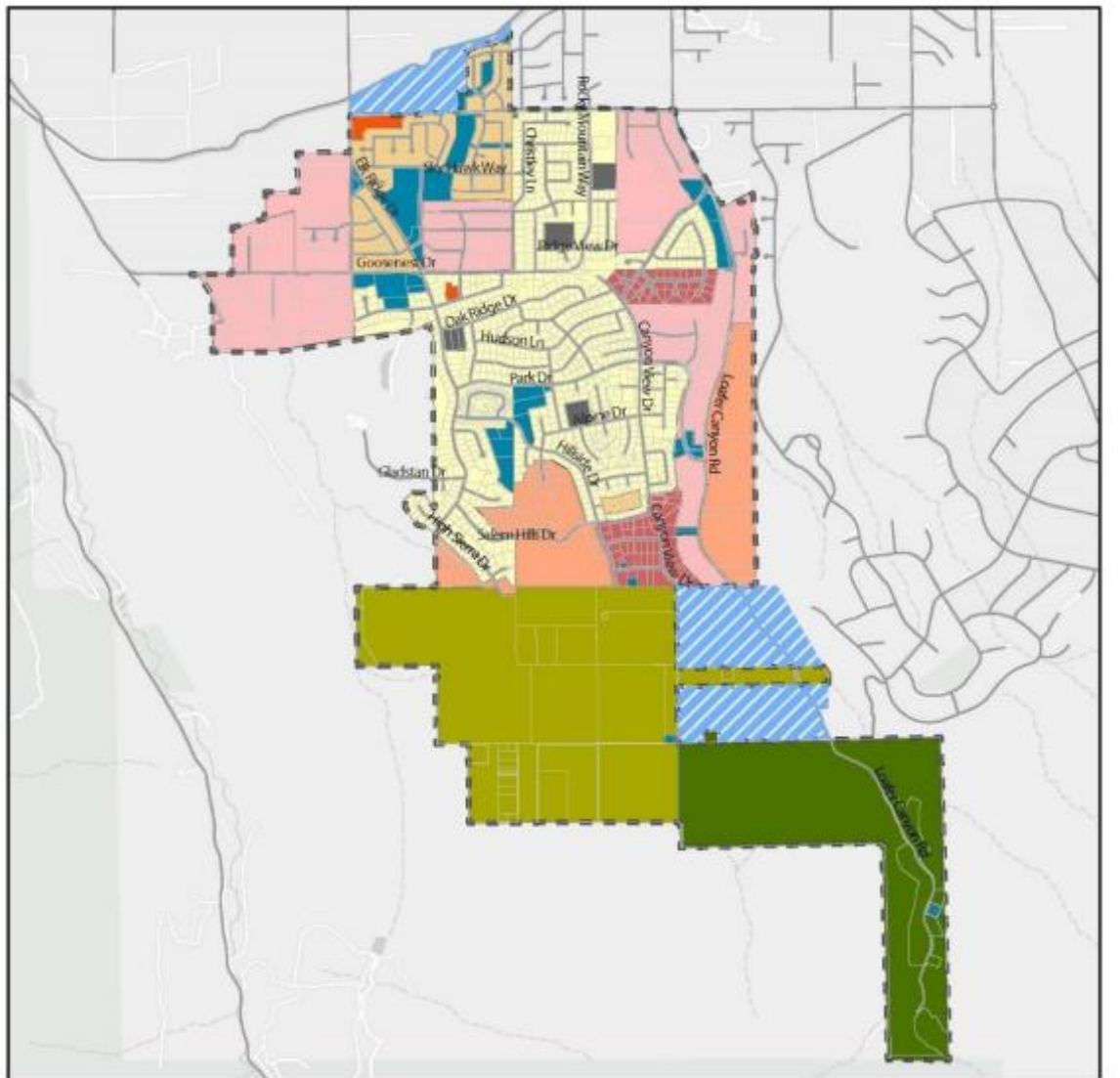
Proposed annexation areas may include existing agricultural, forest, recreational, or wildlife management lands. Elk Ridge anticipates future annexations of land that

preserves open space and facilitates access to recreational opportunities that will benefit residents.

**10. Justification for Excluding Lands from Potential Expansion Area**

No developed lands within one-half miles of Elk Ridge's boundary are excluded from the potential expansion area, except those lands already incorporated in other municipalities.

Exhibit 1: Annexation Declaration Area Map



Elk Ridge City Boundary



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

**Land Use**

- |                               |                                    |                   |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Critical Environmental (CE-2) | Hillside Residential (HR-1)        | Future Annexation |
| Critical Environmental (CE-3) | Residential (R-1-12000)            |                   |
| Institutional                 | Residential (R-1-15000)            |                   |
| Public Facilities             | Residential (R-1-20000)            |                   |
| Commercial (C-1)              | Residential Livestock (RL-1-20000) |                   |