

# GENERAL PLANNING

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## GUIDANCE & BEST PRACTICES

AN INTRODUCTION FOR LOCAL LEADERS

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**RURAL**  
  
**PLANNING GROUP**



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*“When you fail to plan,  
you plan to fail.”*

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Benjamin Franklin



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## INTRODUCTION

What is a general plan? Utah state code requires every municipality to have one. Consultants and contractors will offer to produce one for you. You may have a dusty binder in the city office with the words “General Plan” on the cover. But what is a general plan? What does it do? Why does your community need one?

This guide is intended to help citizen planners, local government staff, and elected officials understand the reasons behind local government planning. These groups are frequently called upon to make planning decisions, but they may not always have specific training or expertise on planning issues. By knowing why you need a general plan, how to craft one, and how to implement it, your community will be able to make informed decisions that will benefit your town now and for years to come.

This guide will help you understand the role that the general plan should play in your community. It will provide an overview of the purpose of planning; discuss who is involved in the creation and execution of the general plan; provide general guidance of how to create or update the plan; outline how to implement the general plan; and finally provide some useful resources for plan development.

Please refer to the companion documents on general planning for more assistance writing your plan. For those and other guides, including resources for general plan writing, please visit [www.ruralplanning.org/toolbox](http://www.ruralplanning.org/toolbox).

## WHY PLAN?

Many Utah cities were laid out by their pioneer founders in a systematic way that gave the community form and function. The “grid system” approach to planning created city blocks in a grid pattern that encouraged agricultural and industrial uses, promoted a sense of community, and set aside spaces for religious, educational, and social activities. The effect of those early planning decisions is still felt in Utah today.

Planning is still needed, and the decisions made now will influence communities into the future. Planning can help communities prepare for the future by identifying their desired state and establishing the actions needed to make those desires a reality. Additionally, planning can help save financial and social costs, and helps cities to manage growth, protect the environment, and foster a high quality of life.

Planning a community is like building a home. How do you go about doing it? There are many decisions that you have to make that will determine the look, feel, and function of the home. You might look at your budget to see what you can afford, identify where you want to put the home, and decide how you want it to look. You can decide between one or two stories and determine how big the yard will be. You might choose between a garage or concrete pad for your RV. You will need to know if you will build it yourself or hire a builder. The decisions you make and the methods you pursue make up your plan to construct the home. By following your plan, you will get your ideal home.

## SHOULD I UPDATE MY PLAN?

There are many reasons to update your general plan; the below questions are several common reasons. See Appendix A for a general plan and ordinance review.

- Does it not help you make decisions?
- Was it last updated over 10 years ago?
- Have significant changes happened in your community since the last update (major growth / decline, industry changing, regional changes, etc.)?
- Is it missing a land use, transportation, and affordable housing element (if over 1000 population)?
- Is there conflict with the plan and the town ordinances, specifically zoning ordinances?
- Is the zoning map inaccurate or need changes?
- Are citizens asking to update the town's vision?

Like the home, your community needs a plan to arrive at its desired condition. Comprehensive planning gives your city control over how it will progress and change over time. It enables cities to direct how change will occur, such as where new homes and parks will be constructed. Planning is not a cure-all (for example, it may not prevent the closure of a major industry) but it will help your city be prepared for the future and to proactively react to changing needs.

Planning also allows stakeholders to know what to expect of your city. The general plan outlines your city's vision for the future, and describes how that vision will be achieved. Residents, developers, businesses, state government, and other interested parties should be able to see how your city will change by reviewing the general plan and it will help them as they make their own decisions.



# WHAT IS THE GENERAL PLAN?

The general plan (sometimes called the comprehensive, or master plan) is a advisory policy document that outlines your city’s vision for its future. It is a collection of maps, information, and policies that are designed to guide the city’s future<sup>1</sup>. It describes where you are, where you want to be, and how you will get there. The general plan indicates your city’s priorities and intentions for the future.

The State of Utah requires every county and municipality to have a general plan. State law requires local governments to “prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-range plan” in order to “provide for the health, safety, and welfare” of each municipality and its residents<sup>2</sup>.

PURPOSES OF PLANNING (UCA 10-9a-102)	
• Promote prosperity	• Foster agricultural and other industries
• Improve morals, peace and good order	• Protect both urban and non-urban development
• Improve comfort, convenience, and aesthetics	• Protect and ensure access to sunlight for solar energy devices
• Protect the tax base	• Protect property values
• Secure economy in governmental expenditures	• Provide fundamental fairness in land use regulation

Under state law, public infrastructure cannot be authorized or constructed if it does not conform to the general plan<sup>3</sup>. The law further describes the general plan as “an advisory guide” to land use decisions<sup>4</sup>. The general plan’s visions, goals, and strategies guide the city council in enacting land use regulations, ordinances, approving annexations, and pursuing economic development. For example, future land use zones are enacted through zoning ordinances. As such, the general plan serves as the guiding policy document for land use ordinances and decisions.

General plans come in all shapes and sizes. They can be done in-house by citizen volunteers, or by paid consultants. They can be brief or lengthy, print or digital, simple or complex. Cities in Utah are given a great deal

of flexibility in creating a general plan that fits their city’s unique situation. No matter how cities create their general plans, there are certain elements that must be included per Utah state code<sup>6</sup>:

## *Land Use*

Land use is one of the most important elements of the general plan. The city’s land use policies and goals can have a real and important impact on its look, feel, and safety. This element will describe how the city currently uses its land and how it will use it in the future.

## *Transportation*

The transportation element of the general plan addresses public transportation infrastructure in the community. This element consists of the general location and use of existing roads, streets, highways, rail, and other means of transportation. It discusses the location and use of future modes of transportation. The transportation element of the general plan describes the city’s current transportation conditions and discuss their strengths and limitations. A maintenance schedule for public roads is also frequently part of the transportation element.

## *Moderate Income Housing*

The housing element of the general plan highlights the quality, affordability, and types of housing that currently exist in the community, and which kinds of housing the community hopes to develop. This element is required by state law for municipalities larger than 1,000 people, but can be useful for smaller communities.

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS	
Utah code allows for general plans to contain any elements which the town feels are appropriate. The following are some sample possible elements (not an exhaustive list):	
• Vision	• Arts and culture
• Environmental issues	• Parking
• Public services	• Annexations
• Parks and recreation	• Historic preservation
• Economic development	• Community promotion
• Blight control and redevelopment	• Agriculture and food
• Main street	• Urban forestry

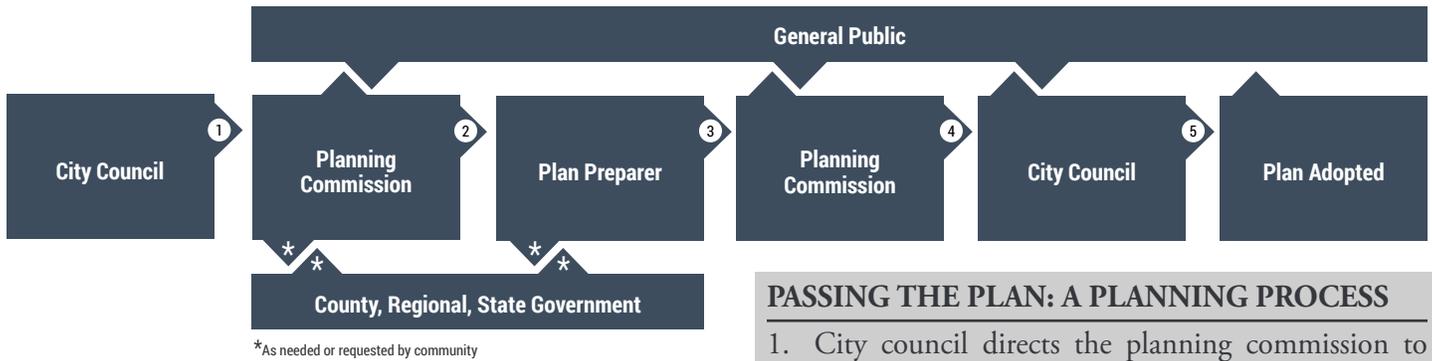


Figure 1: General planning process with involved parties

### ***Implementation/Review***

In addition to the required elements, it is recommended that your general plan include an implementation plan detailing how you will put your plan into action. It may also include a capital improvement plan that outlines the city’s future capital improvement plans, including when the improvements will take place and how the city will pay for them. An annual review of the plan is also helpful to make sure that you are meeting your goals.

## **WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE GENERAL PLAN?**

Planning is a group effort. Creating the general plan involves many groups, each of which will contribute in different ways.

### ***Planning Commission***

By law, the responsibility for the creation of the general plan falls to the planning commission<sup>5</sup>. The planning commission is an advisory body made up of citizens appointed by the city council, and is responsible for making land use recommendations to the city council. Under the guidance of the city council, the planning commission collects input, drafts policies, and creates a draft general plan. They are required to hold one public hearing on the plan or any updates before forwarding a recommendation to the city council.

### ***Citizens***

Planning is a community activity and should involve as many in the community as possible. After all, those who

### **PASSING THE PLAN: A PLANNING PROCESS**

1. City council directs the planning commission to update or draft the general plan.
2. Planning commission notifies the public of its intent to draft or amend the general plan. After a hearing with the public, the plan preparer begins to draft the document. County, regional, or state government can support the planning commission with data and information.
3. The plan preparer passes their draft to the planning commission
4. The planning commission consults with the public before recommending it to the city council.
5. The city council makes final revisions and adopts the revised/new general plan in a public meeting.

live in your city will be directly affected by the policies laid out in the general plan. Citizens provide input to the general plan, and let leaders know what they would like for their city. Youth, seniors, or other specified groups can be directly invited to participate.

### ***Plan Preparer***

The plan preparer is the person or group that creates, in part or in whole, the general plan. The plan preparer can be city staff, paid consultants or contract planners, the planning commission, private volunteer citizens, or other invested parties.

### ***City Council***

While the planning commission has the duty to draft a general plan, the city council as the legislative body is the only authorized body that can approve and adopt the general plan. The city council reviews the draft recommended by the planning commission and can make changes before adoption. Once the general plan is adopted, the city uses it to guide development and infrastructure decisions.

## *County, Regional, and State Government*

Other government agencies can provide support to your city's efforts. Coordinating with neighboring municipalities, special service districts, and the county can help address shared issues such as zoning immediately outside of city limits, transportation, economic development, and recreation. Neighboring cities or your county may also have resources available to help you draft and carry out your plan.

Regional organizations, such as the association of governments, can provide valuable assistance on issues such as housing. Contact your local regional planner to find out how your association of governments can assist you.

Finally, state agencies are available to assist your city as it drafts its general plan. State agencies can provide appropriate data and assistance promptly and free of charge. Some agencies are needed to address state-owned properties, like the Utah Department of Transportation and state highways.

## **PLAN PREPARER CONSIDERATIONS**

When choosing a plan preparer, make sure you are getting what you need. Communities with little capacity may feel they must contract all of their services outside of the community. While an efficient use of resources in some circumstances, communities should evaluate their own community-level capacity. Sometimes, hiring additional staff or seeking volunteers from the community can have longer-lasting benefits than contracting by creating future capacity. If you contract, follow your procurement process (or the state's process) and choose someone:

- with experience in communities similar to yours
- who is well received by your stakeholders and citizens
- who respects your budget
- who will respond to your direction.

## **REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM CONTACTS**

### **Bear River AOG**

*Box Elder, Cache, Rich*  
Brian Carver  
435-713-1420  
brianc@brag.utah.gov  
170 North Main  
Logan, UT 84331

### **Southeastern Utah ALG**

*Carbon, Emery, Grand, San Juan*  
Michael Bryant  
435-637-5444 ext. 414  
mbryant@seualg.utah.gov  
375 S Carbon Ave.  
Price, UT 84501

### **Mountainland AOG**

*Summit, Wasatch, Utah*  
Robert Allen  
801-229-3813  
rallen@mountainland.org  
586 East 800 North  
Orem, UT 84087

### **Six County AOG**

*Juab, Millard, Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Wayne*  
Travis Kyhl  
435-893-0713  
tkyhl@sixcounty.com  
P.O. Box 820 (250 North Main)  
Richfield, UT 84701

### **Uintah Basin AOG**

*Daggett, Duchesne, Uintah*  
Kevin Yack  
435-722-4518  
keviny@ubaog.org  
330 East 100 South  
Roosevelt, UT 84066

### **Wasatch Front Regional Council**

*Weber, Davis, Morgan, Salt Lake, Tooele*  
Val John Halford  
801-363-4250  
vhalford@wfrfc.org  
295 North Jimmy Doolittle Rd.  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116

### **Five County AOG**

*Beaver, Iron, Washington, Garfield, Kane*  
Gary Zabriskie  
435-673-3548  
gzabriskie@fivecounty.utah.gov  
P.O. Box 1550 (1070 W 1600 S, Bldg. B)  
St. George, UT 84771

# HOW DO YOU BEGIN YOUR GENERAL PLAN?

Creating or updating a general plan can be a daunting prospect. Once you know why your city needs a plan, you must 1) plan to plan, 2) write the plan, 3) adopt the plan, and 4) implement the plan. This section will discuss these steps. The timeframes listed are for general guidance; local planning timeframes may vary.



Figure 2: Rough Planning Timeline<sup>7</sup>

## *Plan to Plan*

The first step should be to review your general plan. Identify sections that may need updating, and sections that can likely remain. Demographic data and projections will likely need updating, while often the vision may not.

After you examine your own plan, look at the plans of other cities. What do you like and what don't you like? What will work for your city? You might be tempted to just substitute the names and adopt another city's plan as yours—don't. Remember that each city is unique and another city's plan will not be written to address your situation.

Before you begin writing, identify what you need to include in the plan. Are there any elements in addition to those required by state law that should be included for your community? By identifying the scope of the document, you will know what the finished document should look like. You should also outline your public engagement strategy to involve the public throughout the process (see opposite page).

You also need to determine your goal for how long the planning process will last. The graphic above can serve as a general guideline. Many factors will help you decide this, including citizen participation, the complexity of the issues your city faces, and the availability of the plan preparer. Planning typically is not a quick process, and it

is not unusual for municipalities to take a year or more to complete their plans. It is better to take your time to draft a quality plan than to move quickly on a plan that is not useful and must be revised soon after. Every community's timeline is going to vary based on their available resources and who is completing the plan. When establishing a plan writing timeline drafting it in-house, one good rule of thumb is to estimate one month per major section. Private consultants can often finish a plan quickly, however your community should select a timeframe that best suits the town's budget and desires.

In addition to your planning timeline, you should also establish a budget for the plan's creation. Identify how much money you are willing to spend on the general plan. You may find it useful to establish a budget range, with the least and most you expect to spend. Costs will increase the more complex the plan becomes; hiring a consultant will cost more money (but take less time) than doing the plan in-house. Getting several quotes from consultants and asking other similar cities about how much their plan cost may help your city know how much to budget. Remember to follow your community's procurement process, or the state's procurement process if you haven't adopted one.

Next, decide who will draft your plan. The plan preparer should work within the budget and schedule parameters you set to meet your plan's scope. If you choose to hire a consultant, be sure to follow your procurement code and issue a request for proposals to multiple consultants that includes the desired scope, budget, and timeline.

Once you are ready to begin the general plan, collect community input. The most important part of any community is its residents. A general plan is a great way to involve the public in shaping the community and a successful plan will consider the needs, wants, and wishes of residents as it guides policy decisions. It is important to identify their concerns and hopes for the community's future at the beginning of the process. Community members will help you to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your city, as well as potential opportunities and threats to the community. Citizens can also find innovative solutions to logistical, budgetary, or geographic challenges.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

State code outlines minimum public engagement standards, found in 10-9a-203–204. Public engagement best practice invites communities to adopt an open, broadly engaging strategy throughout the general plan update process—well beyond the minimum legal requirements. The community should be engaged early to help scope the process and identify the plan elements. With more robust and comprehensive engagement comes better informed and more generally supported decisions.

There are many methods that you can use to engage your residents in the visioning process. A simple way for the public to interact is through public meetings regarding the plan. These meetings give you the opportunity to present information and pose questions to the public. The resulting dialogue will help you craft a vision that matches the needs and desires of the community.

Another effective method to collect community input is through surveys. Surveys allow you to ask for the same input from everyone who takes it, ensuring that everyone gets an equal chance to respond or comment on a topic. If your community has conducted surveys in the past, try to include some of the same questions so that you can document changes in responses over time. Surveys can be offered online through paid services such as SurveyMonkey or free services such as Google Forms. Alternatively, they can be mailed with a utility bill to residents or carried door to door by volunteers. Surveys may allow you to reach a larger portion of the community.

A common issue with community engagement is that only a few people participate. The most vocal and active voices may be the only ones that get heard even though they do not accurately represent the community. If this is the case in your city, you may need to make special efforts to engage underrepresented groups in your community like youth, the elderly, racial or ethnic minorities, or even different religious groups. For example, in one Utah town the general plan steering committee teamed up with the local high school to survey the students. Under-represented groups can provide valuable perspective and contribution to the community plan.

For public engagement ideas and resources, go to the Toolbox at [www.ruralplanning.org/toolbox](http://www.ruralplanning.org/toolbox).



## Write the Plan

Whether you are updating your plan or creating a new one, remember that you shouldn't reinvent the wheel. Your current general plan may contain meaningful goals, well-formed plans, or accurate maps. You should keep anything that is still relevant to the community. Do not feel that you need to rewrite and rearrange the entire plan because your plan is out of date. Sometimes all a section needs is updated information. For example, it may not be necessary to create a new zoning map if the prior one is still accurate and should remain the same.

When writing each section of the general plan, follow a general approach of understanding the current state of the community by collecting current information and analyzing that information; deciding on what the future state should be through verifying/presenting the information with the public; and identifying how you'll move from the current state to the future state by writing out proposed policy statements. For example, when writing the transportation section, obtain data on current traffic counts, current road conditions, and public preferences on road prioritization, sidewalks, trails, and recreation vehicles. The data should then be analyzed together, examining and prioritizing roads for repair/upgrades. The results of that analysis can then be presented to the public and planning commission for verification, where they may find out that residents want to prioritize a walking trail. Finally, policy statements are drafted following the information, like "Residents of Happytown appreciate transportation options and prioritize development of a north-south multi-use trail."

That same pattern begins with understanding and drafting the community's vision. The vision should be a concise statement that describes what the city should become and be focused on the community's values and needs. The vision influences and guides the city's goals and strategies for achieving those goals. It also shapes policy decisions, such as zoning and ordinances. The vision needs to be built around the quality and character of a community, not quantities or specific assets. Try to avoid vague or cliché concepts that provide little direction—while every city should be “a great place to live, work, and play” a vision should be more specific for your community's desires.

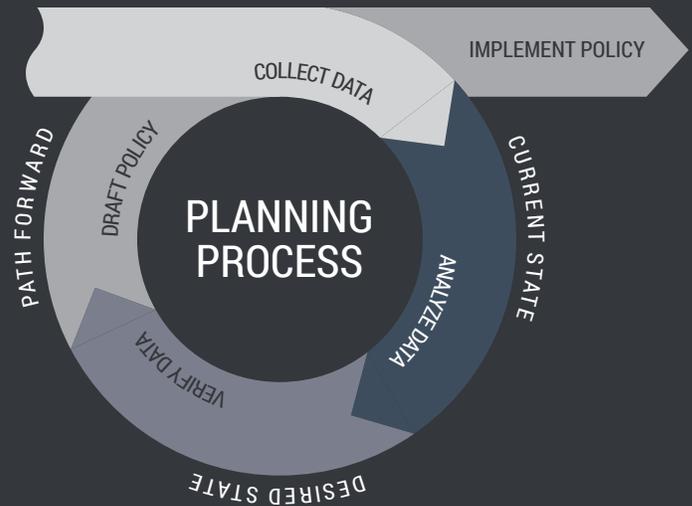


Figure 3: General planning writing process for each section

An effective plan is based on accurate maps and data. Make sure that all maps and data you include in your plan are up-to-date with current information. To make informed assumptions and decisions, you must have reliable data. There are several free data sources that are available to you (see Data Resources on pg. 11). The US Census Bureau updates its large collection of data on population, housing, and commuting every ten years, with renewed projections every five years. Be aware, however, that as the census ages the data estimates become less reliable.

With so much possible information to include, remember to take care of the required elements first. Keep the core document simple. It should **not** be written like an ordinance. Each included element should be clear and concise. Include only the most necessary maps and data in the main document. Other facts and figures should be included as appendices to be referenced.

General plans must contain sections on transportation, land use, and an affordable housing plan (for cities with >1000 population). Work on these three pillars before expanding the document. These required elements should correlate with one another. For example, your land use goals and strategies should support and complement your affordable housing goals and strategies. When done properly, the three required elements will help to shape the rest of the plan.

## DATA RESOURCES

U.S. Census Bureau: [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)  
Official population counts along with a myriad of relevant data and estimates.

Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute: [www.gardner.utah.edu](http://www.gardner.utah.edu)  
In Utah, the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute also provides county and some city-level demographic and economic data.

Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS):  
[www.jobs.utah.gov/wi/data/index.html](http://www.jobs.utah.gov/wi/data/index.html)  
DWS collects economic and labor information at the county level, such as the largest employers and unemployment rates.

Automated Geographic Reference Center (AGRC):  
[www.gis.utah.gov/data](http://www.gis.utah.gov/data)  
AGRC is a database of mapping information, including aerial photos and property parcels.

Utah Data: [www.data.utah.gov](http://www.data.utah.gov)  
A collection of public data sets covering a broad range of topics, from high school graduation rates to alcoholic beverage licenses to historic fire data.

With each section of the document, examine population projections for the town and region. While these estimates are not concrete, and data for small communities is notoriously inaccurate, it is important to consider what is possible with the future of your community's land use, transportation, and affordable housing. Another useful way to examine a community's future is to consider three different scenarios: expected growth, status quo, and decline. These can help the public and decision makers consider possible futures without the need for precise forecasting.

### Land Use

Begin by understanding your community's current land uses and how they are used. Are there many non-compliant structures? Were there many variances granted? Are there special issues of consideration, such as airport expansions, agricultural land preservation, or sensitive lands to consider? What is the public's perspective on land use and open space within the community? Do they want to encourage specific types of growth?

After you understand the current land use situation, analyze the results. Look for areas of specific concern and land-use designations that may need to change. Then verify the analysis with the public and leaders to ensure that it is accurate and representative of the town's desired direction.

Before drafting vision or policy statements, describe your land use goals. These goals should prioritize the uses for the city's different areas, such as the land along main street, agricultural lands, or land bordering federal lands. These goals can be articulated in the plan, then the policy statements are the way your community will move toward those goals. Your goals and statements should take state standards and requirements under consideration, and will help guide your desired zoning ordinances.

### Transportation

Begin by obtaining data, such as current traffic counts, current road conditions, and public preferences on road prioritization, sidewalks, trails, and recreation vehicles. This data should then be analyzed holistically, looking for critical areas of need. Consider the future development of the community. Where is housing developing? What are the major transportation routes? Are there issues of access? Some important transportation issues to consider are: the number and types of vehicle that will use the road (farm vehicles, family cars, ATVs, bicycles, etc.); the size of rights-of-way and their maintenance; the existence of sidewalks; utilities infrastructure underneath roadways; and the city's ability to maintain roads.

The results of that analysis can then be presented to the public and planning commission for verification. This can help identify the community's transportation goals. If state-controlled highways cross your town, it is wise to clearly define the community's goals for those roads and discuss those goals with the Department of Transportation. You may also want to adopt a maintenance schedule for public roads as part of the transportation element. If this is not done in the general plan, it should be completed in the transportation master plan.

## Moderate Income Housing

For cities with a population over 1000, a moderate income housing section is required, although it can be useful for smaller communities as well. There are online resources that can help identify your community's moderate income housing gap. Visit [ruralplanning.org/toolbox](http://ruralplanning.org/toolbox) then select the Affordable Housing section for resources. A recommended affordable housing plan outline is available there or included in Appendix B.

Your housing plan should coordinate with your land use and transportation plans. For example, your goal could be to increase the number of multi-family units in town. The accompanying actions could include amending residential zones to allow different housing and drafting ordinances to regulate their development.

## Other Sections

State code and best practices recommend many optional elements to include in a general plan. As you review other community's general plans, you may identify sections that your community may want to include. Your vision and goals will help you to decide what elements to include. See page 6 for ideas on other possible sections.

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## ADOPT THE PLAN

After the plan preparer has drafted the document, the plan is passed to the planning commission. The planning commission then reviews the document before recommending it to the city council for adoption.

After the plan is passed to the city council, the city council can make whatever final revisions they deem necessary. They must hold a public hearing on the adoption or modification of the general plan and adopt the revised/new general plan in a meeting. This process may take several months as the council makes changes based on final community input and presents those changes to the public.

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## IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Once your plan is written, reviewed, and adopted, the last step is to implement it. Your general plan is meant to be used! A plan that sits on a shelf or in a drawer gathering dust is a failed plan. The city council, the planning commission, those over parks and public works, and any other land use and appeal authorities should be familiar with the contents of the general plan and reference it when making decisions. Especially when it comes to land use decisions, the general plan should provide guidance on how to act.

The general plan should also influence other city documents, including ordinances, budgets, and capital improvements plans. These tools carry out the directions given in the general plan. When considering new developments, planning infrastructure updates, and financial projections, consult your general plan.

An effective general plan lists goals and strategies to achieve those goals. Your general plan should tell what to do and when to do it. Follow the instructions in the general plan and make changes as required.

Finally, continue to update the general plan and revise as necessary. If the general plan is not working for your city, make the necessary changes so that it becomes an asset. Keep information updated so that it represents your community. Consider seriously revising or rewriting your plan every five to ten years, with smaller updates as necessary in between. You may want to review your plan annually to see if it is working for your city.

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## CONCLUSION

General plans are not only a required legal document, but a central resource for communities to make strategic decisions and shape their future. This guide provided a broad overview of general plans and the planning process. For more information, please see other accompanying guides and resources for general planning at [www.ruralplanning.org/toolbox](http://www.ruralplanning.org/toolbox).

## IS YOUR GENERAL PLAN EFFECTIVE?

- Is it based on your community's vision?
- Were citizens involved and will they remain involved?
- Is your plan consistent?
- Is your plan realistic?
- Is your plan within your ability to control or influence?
- Is your plan financially feasible?
- Does it have appropriate goals, objectives, policies, and strategies?
- Does it help you make decisions?
- Can your ordinances align with it?
- Does it have the potential to guide your town's decisions for 10+ years?

DESIGN THE DOWNTOWN

LAMP POSTS & LIGHTING

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# RESOURCES

## **Rural Planning Group**

The State of Utah's Rural Planning Group is part of the Community Development Office, in the Division of Housing & Community Development in the Department of Workforce Services. The Community Development Office assists rural Utah communities with planning and management issues through training, consulting, research, and technical support. It strives to help communities be self-reliant, self-determined, and prepared for the future. The Rural Planning Group produces guides to planning issues, trains local leaders on planning and land use, and offers free consultations and assistance.

[www.ruralplanning.org](http://www.ruralplanning.org).

## **Regional Planning Program**

The Utah Permanent Community Impact Fund Board (CIB) funds a full-time planner in each regional association of governments (AOG). These planners help provide continuous quality planning and can assist with community planning, including general plans. See page 7 for contact information.

<https://jobs.utah.gov/housing/cib/rpp.html>

## **Utah League of Cities and Towns**

The Utah League of Cities in Towns serves the 247 incorporated municipalities in the State of Utah by representing municipal government interests to the state and federal government. The League also provides trainings on planning and land use, offers consultations and assistance, and hosts several conferences annually. [www.ulct.org](http://www.ulct.org).

## **Land Use Academy of Utah**

The Land Use Academy of Utah (LUAU) is funded by the Utah State Legislature to provide professional education to civic leaders. LUAU produces instructional publications and videos on land use and planning issues, and conducts training sessions for local leaders several times a year.

[www.luau.utah.gov](http://www.luau.utah.gov).

## **Land Use Institute**

The Land Use Institute aims to raise the professionalism of those involved in the land use arena. The Land Use Institute sponsors an annual fall conference, hosts seminars, and offers both print and electronic instructional materials. [www.utahlanduse.org](http://www.utahlanduse.org).

## **American Planning Association Utah Chapter**

The Utah Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) is the professional organization for Utah's planners. APA Utah organizes two conferences each year, hosts questions and answers through its email listserv, and maintains an extensive library of planning resources on its website. Though not all citizen planners qualify for APA membership, its conferences and many of its materials are available to everyone.

[www.apautah.org](http://www.apautah.org).

## **Consultants**

Planning consultants and contract planners are available across the state to assist on a variety of issues. Consultants can be used to write the entire plan or only certain parts of it. Before hiring a consultant, make sure to do your due diligence to find the consultant that has the right knowledge, skills, and attributes for your project, budget, and community. For a list of planning consultants, visit [www.ruralplanning.org/consultantlist](http://www.ruralplanning.org/consultantlist).

## **Other Publications**

*The Small Town Planning Handbook* by Thomas S. Daniels et. al. Published by the American Planning Association, this book is a comprehensive guide on the planning process, specifically adapted to small communities.

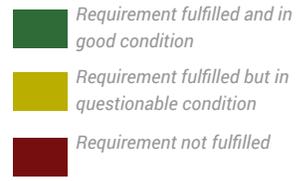
## **WORKS CITED**

1. Iowa State University Extension "The Comprehensive Plan"
2. UCA 10-9a-401(1)
3. UCA 10-9a-406
4. UCA 10-9a-405
5. UCA 10-9a-403
6. UCA 10-9a-403 (2)
7. Josh Runhaar, Planning Law and Implementation, Lecture 19 - Comprehensive Plans, Slide 7, 3-24-15

# APPENDIX A

# CITY & TOWN

# PLANNING & ZONING ORDINANCE REVIEW\*



ITEM <small>Required by State code... (State code reference)</small>	CONDITION	NOTES / CITY CODE
Do we have a General Plan? (10-9a-401(1))		
Is General Plan up-to-date? (Last 10 yrs) (best practice)		
Do we have an official map? (10-9a-401(2)(j), -407, 10-9a-103(34))		
Do we have a zoning ordinance? (10-9a-502)		
Do we have a zoning map? (10-9a-502, 505)		
Are our plans and ordinances publicly available?		

## PLAN ELEMENTS Does it cover...

Land use (10-9a-403(2)(i))		
Affordable housing (10-9a-408(2)(iii)) (*Towns, defined in 10-2-301 as municipalities with a population less than 1,000, are exempt)		
Transportation (10-9a-403(2)(ii))		
Implementation strategy (10-9a-403(3)(e) best practice)		
Capital improvements plan (aligned to GP 10-9a-406)		

## ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

Creates a Planning Commission (10-9a-301(1)(a))		
Establishes an appeal authority (10-9a-701(1))		
Proper allocation of land use authority		
Nonconforming uses match State code (10-9a-511)		
Residential facilities for elderly (10-9a-516, 57-21-5)		
Residential facilities for disabled (10-9a-516, 57-21-5)		
Allows for compliant manufactured homes (10-9a-514)		
Addresses cell towers (can't prohibit)		
Reestablish nonconforming structure after calamity (10-9a-511(3)(a))		
Allows for charter schools in all zones (10-9a-305 (7)(a))		
Allows for adult-oriented businesses (must permit somewhere)		
Conditional use ordinance has objective standards / approved when conditions met (10-9a-507)		

## PROCEDURES for...

Planning Commission (10-9a-301(1)(b))		
Land use authority (10-9a-306) (10-9a-103(26))		
Appeal authority (10-9a-701)		
Understandable notice provisions		
Meetings posted to the Utah Public Notice website? (Multiple)		

## COMMUNITY VISION

Overall, how well are county goals and vision reflected in the code?		
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\* This review does not constitute an official stance nor comprehensive review of the State of Utah on the entity's general plan, zoning map, or zoning ordinance. It is intended for discussion purposes only for local leadership.

# A Moderate Income Housing Element Outline

## Introduction

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- purpose of the plan
- description of how the moderate-income housing plan fits within the context of the community's general plan and how the cooperation of community departments will facilitate the accomplishment of goals outlined in the plan
- discussion of how the community's planning efforts fit within the context of regional planning efforts and the coordination that has taken place between the community and other entities in the development of the moderate-income housing plan
- background information about the community (growth patterns, community sentiments towards housing, local economy, etc.)

## Current Population

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- demographic data from the most recent U.S. Census or American Community Survey
- summary of how the population has changed over the past five to ten years
- number of households within targeted income groups ( $\leq 80\%$  AMI,  $\leq 50\%$  AMI, and  $\leq 30\%$  AMI)

## Current Housing Stock

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- total number of housing units
- breakdown of housing units by:
  - occupancy (renter-occupied or owner-occupied)
  - size (number of bedrooms)
  - quality ("new," "dilandated," etc.)
- affordability of existing housing stock for targeted income groups

## Current Affordable Housing Availability and Need

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- availability of existing housing stock for targeted income groups ( $\leq 80\%$  AMI,  $\leq 50\%$  AMI, and  $\leq 30\%$  AMI) and number of additional units needed
- availability of affordable housing for different races and ethnic groups and number of additional units needed
- availability of affordable housing for different special needs groups (homeless, disabled, veterans, elderly, youth aging out of foster care, victims of domestic violence, etc.) and number of additional units needed
- availability of a variety of housing sizes and number of additional units needed

## **5-Year and 10-Year Population Projections**

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- low, medium, and high population projections for the next five and ten years
- estimate of the percentage of the population that will fall within targeted income levels and special needs groups over the next five and ten years

## **Forecast of Affordable Housing Need**

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- comparison of projected population growth and expected housing construction for the next five and ten years
- estimate of the number of housing units needed by residents within targeted income levels and special needs groups for the next five and ten years

## **Regulatory Environment**

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- analysis of how current zoning regulations impact the availability of affordable housing
- discussion of any potential barriers to affordable housing or Fair Housing

## **Plans to Meet the Affordable Housing Need**

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- goals, policies, and plans designed to strategically meet current and forecasted affordable housing needs
- goals, policies, and plans to eliminate regulatory barriers to affordable housing
- goals, policies, and plans should discuss the following:
  - a timeline
  - the responsible party (or parties)
  - the number of affordable housing units to be built
  - possible locations for new affordable housing units
  - community resources that can be used to support development (RDA/EDA housing set-aside funds, fee waivers, local CDBG funds, donated land, etc.)



# RURAL PLANNING GROUP

Working toward a rural Utah that is self-reliant,  
self-determined, and prepared for the future.

For more resources, visit [ruralplanning.org/toolbox](http://ruralplanning.org/toolbox)

*The Rural Planning Group is a program of the Housing and Community Development Division, part of the Utah Department of Workforce Services.  
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