

## Chapter 7 Housing Plan

### Legislative Requirements

In 1996 the Utah Legislature revised House Bill 295 Affordable Housing. In doing so the legislature reaffirmed “that municipalities and counties should afford a reasonable opportunity for a variety of housing, including moderate income housing, to meet the needs of people desiring to live in a community and that moderate income housing should be encouraged to allow persons with moderate incomes to benefit from and to fully participate in all aspects of neighborhood and community life.”

The Utah Legislature has required that “each county governing board shall, as a part of its general plan, adopt a plan for affordable housing within the county.”

The legislature defined affordable housing as “housing occupied or reserved for occupancy by households with a gross household income equal to or less than 80% of the median gross income of the Six-County Association of Governments statistical area for households of the same size.”

This Sevier County General Plan outlines legislative requirements and contains applicable information pertaining to each of those requirements as follows:

1. An estimate of the existing supply of moderate income housing located within each municipality and within the County is included in the Windshield Housing Survey conducted by the Six County Association of Governments and Sevier County in 1993.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Survey also contains “an estimate of the need for affordable income housing in each municipality with the next five years as revised annually.”<sup>2</sup>
3. Zoning Districts in Sevier County are specified in the Sevier County Zoning Ordinance. Given basic accessibility, economic, transportation and infrastructure requirements, land parcels for affordable and multiple

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<sup>1</sup>Six County Association of Governments; Windshield Housing Survey, 1993.

<sup>2</sup>HB 295 Affordable Housing, 1995. Revised, 1996. For a copy of the full text of this Bill, contact the Office of the Legislative Analyst Utah State Capital Building, Room 425. A summary of the Bill is available in the Sevier County Clerk’s Office.

unit housing are available only within the 11 incorporated communities of the County. The county zoning ordinance encourages low-density development and requires the issuance of a conditional use permit for site specific, clustered and planned unit developments.

4. Existing zoning densities within each of the 11 incorporated municipalities of Sevier County may provide, to a greater or lesser degree, opportunities for affordable housing. Interstate 70, major state roadways and secondary arterial roadways within each of the communities may provide access appropriate to the construction of affordable housing, including, as may be applicable in a community, multiple unit structures on principal transportation routes. Various communities are geographically dispersed and planned such that selected land parcels may accommodate the requirements of residents in each community as may be recommended by city planning commissions and approved by respective city councils.
5. Recommendations by the Sevier County Planning Commission Housing Committee are detailed in succeeding pages of this General Plan. In combination with descriptive and general survey information contained in this element of the Plan, these recommendations describe the county's program to encourage an adequate supply of affordable housing within the incorporated communities of Sevier County:

- a. Land use management regulations which will permit affordable housing presently exist in each of the 11 Sevier County communities;
- b. With the exception of Monroe City, which may need a new waste water disposal system, and smaller, unincorporated clusters of population, several incorporated communities in Sevier have infrastructure that would facilitate the construction of affordable housing;
- c. Each of the municipalities in Sevier County has participated in processes to identify existing housing stock that may require rehabilitation for use as affordable housing;
- d. Sevier County provides building construction and inspection services to communities in the county, including the issuance of occupancy permits. The county may be amenable to reducing or, in appropriate instances, waiving construction related fees generally imposed by the county as an incentive for new or remodeled, affordable housing units;

- e. A significant number of affordable housing stock has been constructed in Sevier County with financing by the Rural Development Administration and other government-related entities. As may be indicated by need, applicable tax incentives are, or may be, utilized to promote the construction of affordable housing within various incorporated communities of the county;
- f. Demand in the urbanized areas of the State has limited the utilization of financing programs offered by the Utah Housing Finance Agency for constructing affordable housing in rural areas of the state such as in Sevier County;
- g. Personnel from the Department of Community and Economic Development are examining how DCED may be able to assist Sevier County communities in utilizing programs for affordable housing.

In advance of the initial 1995, and revised 1996 legislation, the Six County Association of Governments, in which Sevier County is represented, issued an annual report which included a chapter related to Housing Goals & Objectives.<sup>3</sup> The needs assessment portion of the Six County report outlined common problems faced by communities in the region and in Sevier County.

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<sup>3</sup>Six County Association of Governments. Housing Goals & Objectives. June, 1993. Revised, 1995,

Additionally, the County Planning Commission Housing Committee identified multiple needs related to affordable housing within Sevier County. These needs may be summarized as follows:

1. Population growth in recent years has diminished the amount of available housing stock within most communities and in the county;
2. The predominantly smaller communities in Sevier County seem to favor single family residential units and may prefer that affordable housing units be located throughout the community rather than in a single area;
3. Richfield City is the only community with an organized housing authority at the present time, The authority has acted as a clearing house for crisis intervention and housing assistance programs throughout the Six County area;
4. Traditional housing finance agencies, such as the Rural Development Administration programs, seem to have limited, if any, financial assets that could be directed to meeting the present demand for affordable housing in Sevier County;
5. Because of rapidly increasing prices for homes and rental properties, families and individuals with moderate income find it difficult to obtain adequate housing in Sevier County communities;

6. The existing housing stock in Sevier County communities is appreciably older than in the urbanized areas of the State;
7. Studies show that “as much as 45-60 % of the current housing stock in Sevier County is in need of repair and rehabilitation;”
8. Limited resources and tax base are available to address affordable housing needs in Sevier County;
9. In general, public officials and citizens in Sevier County seem to believe that:
  - (i) both private and public sectors have a responsibility to work cooperatively in providing affordable housing;
  - (ii) the role of local and state governments in financing and administering affordable housing should be limited, but may include the identification of alternative and suitable private sector solutions to legitimate public housing needs in the area; and
  - (iii) it may be appropriate for the public sector to seek alternative ways to address the housing requirements of those who are truly needy, including those who are elderly and handicapped.

The committee acknowledges the legal and political discretion of each individual community to address its housing requirements. The committee also believes it is advisable to defer to the criterion and method by which each community may choose to assess its housing and infrastructure requirements.

Members of the committee formulated recommendations they believe will contribute to the use, management and development of lands within Sevier County, including, as applicable, lands designated for affordable housing within incorporated municipalities in the County.

The Housing Committee<sup>4</sup> discussed and reviewed the above and other related data and documents, which apply to this element of the Sevier County General Plan. The committee has endeavored to address the bona fide housing requirements of economically disadvantaged Sevier County residents within the requirements set forth by the State Legislature.

Accordingly, this General Plan addresses multiple issues related to affordable housing in Sevier County and the requirements set forth by HB 295. The Plan outlines alternative actions which the committee feels may be achievable in establishing affordable housing for self-designated, or qualified, residents of the county having legitimate need. It also issues contemporary planning recommendations pertaining to housing in Sevier County and its eleven incorporated communities.

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<sup>4</sup>Sevier County Planning Commission Housing Committee Members: Sam Ware, Chair; Kelly Allen, Dick Allred, Noel Bailey, Tim Christensen, Russell Cowley, Mark Cox. Woody Farnsworth, Ted Fitzgerald, Karen Glover, Connie Hare, Dennis Larson, Richard Leyba, Commissioner Peggy Mason, Ken May, Bill McClure, Gene Mendenhall. Brad Staples, Leon Stewart, Jeanine Turner, Monte Turner, Brent White

## **Providing Affordable Housing**

In a series of meetings extending over several months the Housing Committee considered, discussed, examined and solicited empirical information pertaining to affordable housing in Sevier County. Central to the Committee's findings were the following:

1. An identifiable number of citizens (of all age groupings; diverse economic abilities; exclusive of family and marital status) desiring to reside in an existing community in the county cannot afford a new home and have difficulty in finding suitable housing.
2. Through various agricultural and tourism industries, Sevier County has a seasonal and transitory labor force. Some individuals seeking employment and residency in Sevier County may be identified as minority residents. In some instances, needs of these individuals and families, and others, are not being adequately addressed;
3. There are diverse needs for affordable housing such as for single family housing, senior citizen, handicapped and minority residents housing, for multiple units and planned unit developments. Given identified needs in various areas of the county, the location of housing units within a specific community may be regarded as a secondary interest as long as the legitimate needs of citizens are met;
4. There is a strong sentiment that local initiative and leadership in addressing affordable housing requirements will be preferable to federal or state mandates and the imposition of externally-dictated housing standards;
5. Cooperation of county and community leaders and informed leadership will be required in appropriately responding to affordable housing needs in Sevier County;
6. Unique historical patterns in the settlement of Sevier County are defined and should be adhered to in expanding the infrastructure needed to service future housing stock, particularly those new structures designated as affordable units;
7. Retaining the positive features associated with open space, low density development, clustering of residential communities and a rural lifestyle is imperative in planning for future growth and development within Sevier Valley;
8. There is a deep concern that prime agricultural lands "not be eaten up by houses." By adopting affirmative housing policies, the citizens of Sevier County intend to promote growth within the communities and constructively influence land uses in the unincorporated areas of the county;
9. Some County residents are living in substandard housing. Citizens in general, elected officials, and private sector professionals such as bankers and realtors acknowledge and are concerned about the adequacy of some housing standards;
10. The Housing Committee, and the Sevier County Planning Commission as a whole, is concerned with the suitability of available services and in assuring that proper, enforceable standards are in place for all housing units in Sevier County;

11. Establishing high standards in housing will strengthen the county's tax base and will have a positive affect on the rural lifestyle and living environment;
12. The committee intends to define through this General Plan alternative actions that will address housing needs and then determine how and where affordable housing can be economically provided;
13. Appropriately addressing the rehabilitation and restoration of historic residential structures is important to residents of Sevier County;
14. There is a need to assess the needs of special population groups within Sevier County and to closely examine the needs, requirements and standards for manufactured housing;
15. Higher housing standards can be established if the process is viewed as benefiting everybody. While we may be obliged to improve housing standards, it does not seem advisable to lower standards just because some seem unwilling to live according to established health and safety standards within contemporary society;
16. Experience has shown that it is challenging to keep people informed and aware of various avenues to access existing housing programs. The committee and county leaders hope to communicate present and evolving opportunities for affordable housing to all citizens of Sevier County;
17. It is the intent of this General Plan that smaller lots be located in cities and larger residential plots should be required for those wanting to build in the county;
18. A central question to the density issue is determining what type of affordable housing is needed or wanted and where it can be most economically located;
19. Because of basic economic factors related to transportation, health care and accessibility to services, it seems advisable to locate affordable housing within incorporated communities;
20. Within each community in Sevier County there are low-income, minority and single-parent families who need help in meeting their basic housing requirements. Concern was also directed toward addressing bona fide needs and properly defining the role the county should play in providing affordable housing;
21. Establishing land use policies that encourage cooperation between Sevier County and the incorporated communities will have positive implications for meeting the housing requirements of county residents, particularly those requiring affordable housing and those who may be handicapped or otherwise disadvantaged;
22. Establishing a minimum square footage requirement for all housing units will help to ensure that economical, safe and attractive residential units are constructed in the unincorporated areas of Sevier County;
23. The age and condition of modular or mobile units which exist, or those coming into Sevier County, should be regulated according to the Utah Uniform Building Standards Act and the Uniform Building Code;

24. The Committee believes it is vitally important to address the affordable housing and infrastructure requirements for those with special needs.

Providing affordable housing in the communities of Sevier County is challenging because a number of families are living in substandard housing. The county's low per capita income levels and lack of housing programs to assist in addressing housing needs compound the challenge.

Steady growth in the county is expanding the need for affordable housing, especially for special populations within the county. Addressing this element within the General Plan is a high priority to elected and land use officials in Sevier County.

The Planning Commission Housing Committee seeks to appropriately address each of the major issues relating to affordable housing in Sevier County. The Committee formulated a mission statement and issued the recommendations, which follow.

### **Housing - Mission Statement**

**Infrastructure that will support affordable housing shall be provided, developed or expanded within each existing community within Sevier County and shall tie to existing municipal service lines. Individual communities shall be encouraged to improve present housing standards, retain and promote open spaces adjacent to existing and new housing stock, and provide for the rehabilitation or new construction of affordable residential dwelling units within land use guidelines that will ensure preservation of Sevier County's rural environment.**

### **Recommendations**

1. Retaining desirable features associated with open space, low density development, clustering of residential units and maintaining a rural lifestyle are imperatives in planning for future growth and development within Sevier Valley;
2. Land use and elected public officials should be concerned with the suitability of available housing for all residents and assure that proper, enforceable standards are in place for all existing and newly constructed housing units in Sevier County;
3. Some county residents are living in substandard housing. Elected and land use officials should acknowledge and seek to address inadequacies of selected housing stock within Sevier County;
4. There is a pressing need to assess and address the housing requirements for special populations within Sevier County, particularly those with moderate incomes, as well as minority, handicapped, and senior citizens;
5. It is important to closely examine and upgrade the requirements for manufactured housing in Sevier County. Standards and specifications contained in the Utah Uniform Building Standards Act shall be adopted and enforced in Sevier County;
6. Rehabilitating some housing areas or units and restoring historic residential structures should receive special emphasis in Sevier County;

7. County building officials should work to improve housing standards in the interest of all Sevier County residents, particularly those who may be unable, or may be unprepared, to live according to the basic health and safety standards of contemporary communities;
8. A Sevier County Housing Authority should be established. All recommended actions taken by the County are intended to be conciliatory with the present Housing Authority in Richfield City;
9. The Sevier County Housing Authority should address not only low income and affordable housing, but all housing issues in Sevier County and communities;
10. Residential units, subdivisions and planned unit developments should be located on major arterial roadways within or immediately adjacent to cities to meet the service requirements that will promote affordable housing;
11. Municipal planning commissions and city councils should be encouraged to adopt consensus standards and progressive land use strategies to provide moderately priced housing options while preserving open space within Sevier County communities;
12. The Sevier County Housing Authority, shall, by resolution, establish a close working relationship with each community as well as with interested private sector organizations and public entities within the county;
13. A modular or mobile residential unit shall not be permitted in Sevier County unless the unit meets U.U.B.S.A. standards and, upon inspection, is approved by the Sevier County Building Department;

14. The key emphasis with the Sevier County Housing Authority shall be on projects to disburse affordable housing units throughout the communities rather than in one central location;
15. A major focus of the Sevier County Housing Authority shall be on programs that encourage private, individual home ownership rather than upon providing multiple rental units;
16. At the time the Sevier County Housing Authority is established, five, (as specified by statute) Housing Authority Commissioners shall be appointed by the Sevier County Commission with deference to various geographic areas within the county. An ad hoc representative from each of the incorporated communities within the county shall also be appointed by the County Commission to serve on the Sevier County Housing Authority Board.

### **Housing Policies**

1. **Sevier County shall establish a Housing Authority to:**
  - (a) address **affordable housing** issues, including financing, ownership, and rehabilitation problems;
  - (b) administer state and federal housing monies to provide housing assistance funding to **self-designated, eligible citizens having legitimate need**;
  - (c) **assist special needs citizens**, including disabled, minority, and senior citizens, **as well as 'first home owners'** to meet their housing requirements;
  - (d) oversee the **rehabilitation of existing housing stock**;
  - (e) **establish and enforce housing standards within the county and**
  - (f) **encourage private, individual home ownership**;

2. Sevier County shall, through its zoning ordinance, adopt and enforce regulations that establish **nondiscriminatory housing standards throughout the county, including requirements for mobile and manufactured housing. Provisions of the Utah Uniform Building Standards Act, together with selected provisions of the Uniform Building, Electrical, Fire and Plumbing Codes shall also be adopted in the Sevier County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances;**
3. Sevier County shall encourage and support local builders and contractors, elected officials, financial institutions, real estate professionals and others interested in **rehabilitating selected housing stock and restoring historic residential structures throughout the county;**
4. **Multiple housing units shall be located within existing cities and shall not be permitted in the unincorporated areas of Sevier County.** Single and multiple unit developments, if approved by municipal officials, should be located on approved properties within cities **to provide greater economies for infrastructure and services related to affordable housing.** Affordable housing units, in applicable instances, may be interspersed throughout multiple residential zones to avoid discrimination and ensure compatible density in Sevier communities;
5. **Modular and mobile residential units constructed prior to 1985 shall not be permitted in Sevier County unless the unit meets requirements of the Utah Uniform Building Standards Act and, upon inspection, is approved by the Sevier County Building Department.** This policy is intended to promote healthful and safe

dwelling and to permit temporary or permanent placement of approved mobile **or modular residential units.**

6. It is the intent of these affordable housing policies to **assure compatible land uses** as well as the highest and best use of low-density land areas designated for residential dwelling units. Rural design principles shall be followed, and residential units, subdivisions, and planned unit developments shall be located, as a general rule, **on lands within or immediately adjacent to established cities or towns. This policy is intended to make housing more affordable and serviceable.**