

SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As a society we perform planning activities on a daily basis. We plan our day at work, at home, or in our leisure time. We plan for our future by setting personal or family goals. These goals may be as simple as the purchase of a new car, however, the process and events to attain the goal may be complex and difficult.

The citizens of Elwood have expressed a need for a citywide plan of land use, transportation, and municipal services to meet the growing needs of the community. The planning process for the Town of Elwood is not so different from our individual planning process. However, instead of planning for a few, we must plan for current and future citizens. The development of the Town's General Plan can achieve order and balance within the Town as the citizen's work together to define long term goals for the community.



General Plans come in many different shapes, styles, levels of detail, and often even under a different name such as “Master Plan” or “Comprehensive Plan.” In short, a General Plan is a guide to the future development pattern of a community. An effective General Plan gives the City Council and City Staff an opportunity to take a peek into the future when planning for roads, parks, schools, infrastructure sizes, and commercial and industrial needs. Having a plan for the future can save a significant amount of taxpayer money by placing infrastructure in the right places and having adequate capacity for growth.

Even more important than the advanced planning activities of the General Plan, is the ability it gives citizens to create the type of community it's citizens desire. A meaningful General Plan can significantly influence future development patterns. Elwood desires to be unique and identifiable amongst the urban and suburban landscape of the Wasatch Front. Forethought and planning will help to avoid the urban sprawl pattern of the Greater Salt Lake City area.

The greatest challenge of constructing a General Plan is attempting to predict the future. Typically the life span of a General Plan is about twenty years. If we look back twenty years, in the late seventies and early eighties, things we now take for granted were non-existent or at least rare. The Internet, now almost second hand, was not even discussed. Very few offices had facsimile machines let alone personal desktop computers. Eight track tapes were the mode of music, and not a thought was given to compact discs. The Americans with Disabilities Act, now a guiding force for design, was yet to be adopted. The list of advances could go on and on, but it is clear that predicting the future is shaky at best. It is for this reason that the General Plan, regardless of how well conceived, needs to be continually reviewed and updated in consideration of the latest and most accurate information. However, it is critical to understand the existing plan and the reasoning behind the adoption of the plan prior to making any fundamental directional changes. General direction and values should remain consistent through the amendment and updating processes.

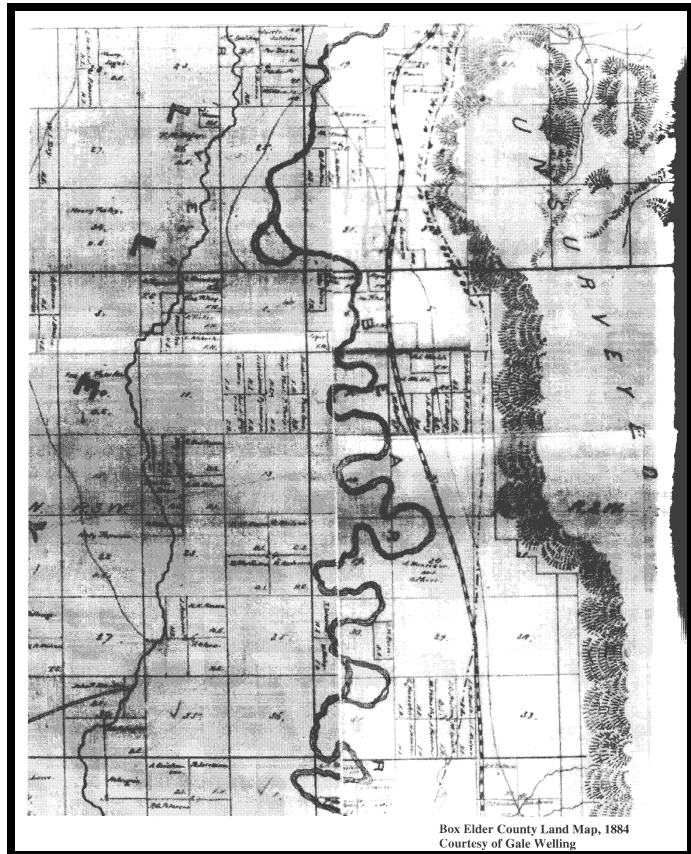
To insure proper planning for the Town of Elwood, the City Council and Planning Commission have begun a long-range planning process to guide the future development of the community. The primary

purpose of this Plan is to recommend orderly future patterns of land use and transportation as well as determine the need for public facilities and services to meet the anticipated growth of the community. Elwood's growth must be viewed in the light of the capacity of the Town to provide needed services.

1.1 History of Elwood

The Town of Elwood was first incorporated as a legal municipality in Utah in 1933. The History of Elwood goes farther back and is part of the settling of the Bear River Valley. The Bear River Valley was formed as the Historical Lake Bonneville receded after it had broken through the Red Rock Pass near Swan Lake in Southeastern Idaho. The fertile lake bed deposit of Lake Bonneville that remained is now part of an important agricultural area within Box Elder County of Northern Utah.

Jim Bridger was probably the first European to lay eyes on this part of Elwood in 1824. The main thrust of development in Box Elder County occurred further south of Elwood. In 1875 some of the first homesteaders in Elwood were the Shoshone Indians. Elwood was known as Indian Town which began the first history and inhabitants of Elwood. This map shows a copy of the Box Elder County land survey map from 1884. Many stories have been passed down concerning Indian Town and the inhabitants. The Settlers and Indians worked the fields together, they shared joys and hardships, and they played together. They shared life in the Bear River Valley together and all have a place in history.



Box Elder County Land Map, 1884
Courtesy of Gale Welling

Today the Town of Elwood is nestled in between the Bear and Malad Rivers. These two rivers form the eastern and western boundary of the current City limits. The surrounding communities of Tremonton on the north and Honeyville on the west limit the growth potential for Elwood to grow in these directions. The Town of Elwood has a population of approximately 800 people. Elwood would seem to qualify as a type of village from a Washington Irving tale if not for the present day busy thoroughfares that crisscross the region, Interstate 15 and State Highway 13 keep the area buzzing with traffic as literally thousands of vehicles speed through on a daily basis.

1.2 Themes of the Plan

The purpose of the General Plan of Elwood can be broken down into six major themes. The themes provide insight to the user of this Plan as what the intent of the Planning Commission and City Council had in the development of this General Plan and goals and strategies that were developed as part of this Plan. The following is a list of the major themes of this General Plan

1. Overall Community Benefit - The General Plan is intended to provide an overall benefit to the

entire community. The principle applies to groups of property owners, neighborhood residents, the business community, or any other stakeholders identified in the Town. Applications of the principle of overall community benefit does not infringe upon an individual's rights under the law.

Overall community benefit can also be seen in the mutually supportive relationship of the Plan's various elements. For example, an attractive and balanced park and recreation system not only offers leisure activities and amenities, but can also prove to be an economic development tool. Urban design considerations can help to produce a sense of civic pride that can translate into strong statement about the community's self-image. A healthy and attractive central business district produce the benefits that are not limited to the owners of property but extend to the entire Town as a reflection of the image presented by the overall focus from government, business and cultural activity in the Elwood area.

Thus, the Plan's elements certainly functions individually as they apply to specific issues or subjects. More important, is their collective and interactive use in an expression of aspiration and vision for the entire community and all of it's citizens.

2. **Compatibility** - The Plan's emphasis on compatibility between the uses of land represents a concern for the collective interests and rights of individuals to live, work and plan in an urban environment where the physical components are in harmony with each other. One of the individual purposes of Town planning and zoning is to assure and protect compatibility between uses. The policies outlined in the land use element, the economic development element, and the transportation element are good examples of the theme of compatibility between land uses, neighborhoods and traffic.
3. **Safety** - The protection of the public general health, safety, and welfare is cited as the purpose and intent for planning and development of local codes and ordinances. Public safety is similarly included as a basic tenet of the General Plan. Safety is a product of compatibility and it's related policies. In the transportation element the overall principle is that safety is more important than convenience or reduction in travel times. In addition, the Plan's policies regarding residential housing, neighborhoods, and natural hazards areas are only a few examples of the importance of safety in the General Plan.
4. **Neighborhood Preservation** - Neighborhood preservation and protection is another theme expressed throughout the General Plan. The importance of designing neighborhoods that facilitate and create a tradition of neighborhood identity is partially reflected in the concepts of the neighborhood portion of the Plan. Neighborhood protections are one of the purposes for the policy on zone changes and preservation of established neighborhoods. Revitalization is the thrust if other policies. The policy for separating neighborhoods from non-local street traffic is also related to the theme of neighborhood protections, and safety.
5. **Utilization, Preservation and Maintenance** - The broad theme of utilization, preservation and maintenance of the Town's infrastructure and significant features is closely related to safety and neighborhood preservation.
6. **Planning** - The theme of planning is naturally predominant in the General Plan. Land Use Planning is emphasized as a preferred alternative versus reacting to land use requests. This planned response concept is the basis for the recommendation to identify, in advance, the probable land use areas. Similarly, infill-housing areas should be identified. The Plan recommends that specific plans be prepared for transportation, and economic development. The Plan also recognizes a strong relationship between planning and engineering regarding several areas of capital improvement and the policies of the General Plan. The need for aggressive and long-range water resources and

drainage planning is expressed in other documents, such as the various capital facilities plans. The importance of land range and comprehensive planning is paramount to the goals of enhancing the Town's unique physical character. Concern with the natural environment is reflected in policies which address significant features and offer guidance for handling developments in sensitive areas as well as preserving natural areas as part of the "Town's fabric as it grows."