

Nibley takes action on Envision Cache Valley open-space plan

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Nibley Mayor Gerald Knight expressed his support of the Envision Cache Valley 2010 report last week and encouraged cities throughout the county to back the initiative.

Envision Cache Valley is an ongoing effort to focus growth in existing municipalities and maintain natural and agricultural spaces, according to its website. It encourages inward growth and compact development as well as walkable communities and mixed-use neighborhoods.

City Manager Larry Anhder says Nibley is ahead of the game and is leading Cache Valley in the envisioning process to preserve open land for future generations.

"We already have an ordinance that went into effect last year that encourages that kind of development," said Anhder. "Instead of developers making cookie-cutter subdivisions, we offer a bonus if they preserve open space."

In April the Nibley City Council approved a resolution to support the Envision master plan and is now reevaluating its own designs to ensure the two plans are compatible.

"We will review our general plan to see if it is consistent with the Envision Cache Valley plan," said Anhder. "We'll look at the places where it's different and consider very strongly changing it to what the Cache Valley plan says."

Knight said the move is a "great step forward in the planning for Cache Valley," and that Nibley has already started many of the strategies called for in the report. The city is already discussing changes in its population density model and investigating how those changes could relate to the conservation of open space.

"We are a community that does not have a lot of high density," he added. "The Envision plan calls for higher density so that's something we're going to have to examine very closely."

In Nibley there is an average of between two and three lots per acre. Home buyers there even have the option to purchase 2-acre lots. The Envision plan suggests higher density housing developments - even up to 11 residences per acre.

Anhder says disagreements are likely to come up in future developments but that everyone agrees that open space in Cache Valley is disappearing.

"I think more people do not want to take care of larger lots," he said. "That's the essence of Envision of Cache Valley. For the very first time we have a whole group of people together asking, 'What are we doing? Where do we really want to be?' If we can build on a little bit smaller lot, that will preserve some of those lands."

Nibley will use a combination of its own general plan and the Envision plan to guide its development strategies.

Anhder added, "Because of the city's location and land availability, it is critically positioned to have an important role in providing housing and infrastructure for the many new residents that will cause the valley population to more than double over the next 30 years. Being the fastest growing city in Cache Valley, Nibley understands growth and the necessity to plan properly for it."

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