



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In early 2004, Weber County, in cooperation with Envision Utah, initiated efforts to develop the Recreation Element of the OVGP. Adopted in 1998, the OVGP has lacked a carefully planned Recreation Element to address the growing demand for recreational activities and resort development in Ogden Valley. As noted in “An Update on the Adopted Ogden Valley General Plan” (Weber County 2001), recreation planning was called for in the OVGP but no conclusions or decisions have been made to date on this item. This Recreation Element helps to meet this need.

In the State of Utah, governing bodies (Cities and Counties) are required to prepare a General Plan that acts as an advisory guide for making land use decisions within their jurisdictional boundaries. Following adoption of a General Plan, governing bodies must then adopt land use ordinances that require all forms of development to comply with the General Plan. Since adoption of the Ogden Valley General Plan (OVGP),

Weber County has prepared and adopted a number of new ordinances to implement the policies included in the OVGP. Preparation of the remaining ordinances in some cases is currently in progress and in other cases is still pending. This Recreation Element document also identifies what ordinances and investments Weber County will need to make in order to implement this component of the OVGP.

Project Purpose

The proposed Recreation Element is needed to establish criteria and direction for general recreation planning, with guidelines and standards for recreation resort development throughout Ogden Valley. As a component of the OVGP, the Recreation Element is predominantly a policy document to serve as a guide to staff, property developers, and governing bodies of Weber County in response to the wants, needs, and desires of the community. This document is the result of the planning efforts that have occurred over the past year, including:

- ✦ Facilitation of monthly Stakeholders Committee meetings to guide the planning process.
- ✦ Facilitation of a comprehensive community involvement program to ensure adequate public input.
- ✦ Review of the OVGP's vision statements to mesh with the Recreation Element.
- ✦ Analyzing the recreation, open space, and resort needs of Ogden Valley.
- ✦ Analyzing the tourism and economic development aspects of recreation and resort development in Ogden Valley.
- ✦ Analyzing the traffic implications of recreation and resort development in Ogden Valley.

- ✦ Preparing a set of recreation and resort planning alternatives.
- ✦ Preparing appropriate policies to guide future recreation and resort developments.

Planning Background

Ogden Valley, located about 8 miles east of Ogden, Utah, in Weber County is a high elevation, northwest- to southeast-trending valley about 4 miles wide and 12 miles long. The general landscape character is a valley surrounded by mountains with rolling foothills dissected by the three major tributaries to the Ogden River. The Project Area for the OVGP Recreation Element is shown in Figure 1, and includes approximately 207,875 acres or about 325 square miles of community, agricultural, and forested lands. Popular recreational destinations within the Project Area include Pineview Reservoir, Powder Mountain Resort, Snowbasin Resort, Nordic Valley Ski Area, Ogden Canyon, and the Ogden River. Residential development is primarily concentrated in the Valley floor area, extending up gentle slopes into the mountain foothill areas. The population beginning in 2005 is estimated at about 5,400 year-round residents in Ogden Valley.

The Ogden Valley General Plan was prepared during the mid-1990s, completed in 1996, and adopted by the Weber County Commission in 1996 and 1998. The geographic focus of that document was on the Valley floor (i.e., the zoning districts other than the hillside and mountainous “Forest” zones). Thus, the OVGP looked carefully at the portion of the Valley that holds the majority of current and future housing units, but it did not assess the majority of the overall land base or the mountainous areas that are home to the Valley's three ski resorts and large holdings of state and federal lands.

The OVGP assessed the carrying capacity of Ogden Valley (i.e., the number of dwelling units or population that could be sustained) in terms of traffic, water supply, and waste water treatment. It clearly indicated that traffic capacity limitations in Ogden Canyon, as well as

potential water quality damage that might result from high growth levels, merited defining a target growth level. The OVGP defined a projected growth management limit for a 20-year time horizon (1996 to 2016) of 6,200 units (Weber County 1998). As a result of that planning process, a majority of the Ogden Valley floor was rezoned from one housing unit per one acre densities to one housing unit per three acre densities. However, the OVGP did not determine the maximum growth potential for Ogden Valley (i.e., the “by right” development entitlement of landowners) given the revised zoning densities. This planning process for development of the Recreation Element helped to fill this gap in citizens understanding of Ogden Valley's maximum growth potential under current conditions.

Ogden Valley Vision Statement

The narrative for the Ogden Valley Vision Statement from the OVGP is as follows:

The residents of Ogden Valley care deeply about the Valley they call “home.” They enjoy their rural lifestyle and the natural beauty that surrounds them. They are justifiably proud of the unique characteristics of Ogden Valley, its timeless mix of pioneer heritage, agricultural lands, recreation opportunities, abundant wildlife, scenic vistas, and quiet living. Visitors to the Valley are struck by its unspoiled character and its unassuming charm. The people of Ogden Valley value these qualities and recognize that protecting, preserving and fostering these qualities requires foresight and wisdom. Their shared affection of this Valley and their hopes for its future guide them as they embark on this planning process.

The two guiding principles from the OVGP Vision Statement are:

- ✦ Protect the natural beauty and natural resources of the Valley.
- ✦ Maintain the Valley's rural atmosphere and rural lifestyle.

Within the Vision Statement narrative for the second guiding principle, the following discussion highlights the desires of Ogden Valley residents concerning recreation:

There are recreational opportunities everywhere. Parents teach their children to fish in the Ogden River, teach them to ski in nearby resorts, and teach them to hunt in the Wasatch Mountains. Residents can hike and horseback ride the many trails which wind their way through the surrounding mountains and hills. They can ride mountain bikes along country roads, golf at courses in Nordic Valley and Wolf Creek, or camp at one of many U.S. Forest Service campgrounds. They can gather at the Huntsville City Park for an impromptu softball game or a family picnic. They can windsurf or water ski on Pineview Reservoir. Visitors also enjoy the recreational opportunities in the Valley. Lower Valley residents often spend at least a portion of their weekend in and around the Valley. In the winter, visitors come to the Valley to ski at Snowbasin, Powder Mountain and Nordic Valley. In the summer, they come to the Valley to camp, boat and fish on the Pineview and Causey Reservoirs and hike and bike in the Wasatch Mountains. Although these visitors do not live in the Valley, they appreciate its outstanding recreational resources.

Relevant General Plan Goals and Objectives

Specific OVGP Goals and Objectives related to recreation and resort development that guided the Recreation Element planning process include the following:

OVGP Goal: Enhance Quality
 Recreational Opportunities

OVGP Objectives

- * Identify recreational assets, facilities and activities in the Valley and determine which facilities might be expanded to meet increased recreational demand and plan for such expansion.
- * Identify areas suitable for community parks, campgrounds or trail systems.
- * Determine the amount and degree of recreational development necessary to support high quality recreation experiences in the Valley.
- * Promote public/private cooperation in recreation planning.
- * Coordinate with Federal and State agencies in recreation planning.
- * Promote safe and responsible recreation conduct in the Valley.
- * Ensure that recreational activities do not harm the natural resources within the Valley.

Document Overview

This document has been divided into the following nine chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Land Use and Zoning Analysis
3. Recreation Analysis
4. Environmental Resources Analysis
5. Transportation Analysis
6. Public Participation and Opinions
7. Issues and Challenges
8. Alternative Development Scenarios
9. Recommended Policies and Implementation Strategies