

Dear Mayor and Town Council Members,

I am writing as a Springdale resident to share comments for your consideration prior to Wednesday's meeting regarding the proposed rezoning of the Lion Boulevard parcel from Valley Residential to Public Use.

I want to be clear at the outset that I support access to medical care, thoughtful long-term planning, and strong municipal services. My intent is not to oppose these goals, but to ask whether the current record demonstrates a level of **demonstrated need** sufficient to justify a **permanent zoning change**, and whether the sequencing of decisions related to this proposal is appropriate.

In preparing these comments, I have reviewed the Springdale General Plan, the Planning Commission staff report, materials provided in response to my recent public records request, the Town's 2023 Rural Communities Opportunity Grant application materials, and recent public reporting on the transition of the Zion Canyon Medical Clinic.

Demonstrated Need vs. Aspirational Planning

Operational data provided by the clinic shows that the existing facility operates on a limited schedule—two days per week in winter and three to four days per week in summer. Appointment data indicates that in most months between 10% and 25% of offered appointments go unfilled. The provider has also confirmed that there is currently no mechanism to measure unmet demand beyond this unfilled rate.

In addition, when Family Healthcare assumed operations following the retirement of the longtime private owners, its CEO publicly stated that a priority would be assessing community need, including how many days per week the clinic should be open and what services are actually required. She also stated that the organization is prepared to adjust and grow as need is demonstrated.

From a planning perspective, this information does not demonstrate a facility operating at capacity or patients being turned away due to lack of space. Rather, it suggests that current constraints may relate to staffing, funding, or operating model rather than physical square footage. Before expanding the physical footprint, it seems reasonable to ask whether expanded hours, staffing, or other operational adjustments were evaluated as alternatives.

Sequencing of Public Investment

I also note that the Town has recently invested significant funds in renovating the existing Town Hall, that the current post office remains operational, and that the medical clinic is not operating full-time and remains in an assessment phase under new ownership.

At the same time, the Town has taken substantial financial steps toward a future municipal campus, including the purchase of the Lion Boulevard property and the adoption of a reimbursement resolution through the Municipal Building Authority allowing bonding reimbursement for that acquisition and related expenses. From a planning standpoint, this reflects a significant financial commitment occurring in advance of clearly demonstrated operational need. The sequencing of these decisions is a key concern for me.

Permanence of Rezoning

The action before the Council is not simply approval of a building, but a permanent zoning change. Even if the initial phase is limited to a 4,000-square-foot clinic, the Planning Commission staff report notes that the parcel could accommodate additional public uses over time. I respectfully ask whether the rezoning is being justified based on the long-term suitability of this site for all Public Use purposes, independent of the current proposal, and whether cumulative future build-out has been fully evaluated.

General Plan Consistency

The General Plan clearly supports enhanced medical services and access to a pharmacy. It also emphasizes protecting residential areas, managing development intensity, and exercising restraint in zone changes. I am seeking clarity on how these principles are being balanced in this proposal, particularly given that the parcel is currently zoned residential and adjacent to established neighborhoods.

If the Council believes additional analysis would be helpful, I respectfully encourage you to request clearer data on unmet demand, operating capacity, and reasonable alternatives before making a permanent zoning decision.

In closing, my concern is not whether enhanced services are a worthy goal—but whether the existing record demonstrates a necessity that warrants rezoning at this time, before existing facilities are fully utilized and before the clinic's own needs assessment process is complete.

Thank you for your time, your service to the community, and your thoughtful consideration of these comments.

Respectfully,

Robyn Chancey
Springdale, Utah