

GENERAL
PLAN
UPDATE

2026

Town of Castle Valley, Utah

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
1) Community Goals	9
2) Land Use	11
3) Housing.....	13
4) Transportation and Roads	15
5) Water and Waste-Water Disposal Systems	18
6) Fire Protection and Emergency Preparedness	21
7) Environmental Concerns.....	24
8) Town Government	26
Appendix I: Map of Castle Valley Town.....	x
Appendix II: Map of Castle Valley Geologic Hazards	x
Appendix III: Map of Castle Valley Watershed	x

**TOWN OF CASTLE VALLEY
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

Master Draft for 6.4.2026 Public Hearing

ADOPTED _____

INTRODUCTION

Castle Valley is a small incorporated Town in Grand County, Utah. Castle Valley was initially a large ranch which was subdivided into five-acre-minimum lots, platted, and recorded on May 11, 1973. The Town of Castle Valley was officially incorporated on July 26, 1985, and developed its Master Plan in 1988. Subsequent General Plan updates were prepared in 1987, 1996, 2001, 2007, 2014, and 2020.

Reason for the Castle Valley General Plan

The General Plan provides the legal basis for land use ordinances and policy issues and gives guidance to the Town government for future decision-making. In order to be effective, it should also embody the goals and desires of the community. One of the most important objectives of the Plan is that it provides a framework for zoning and land use consideration by the Town’s government bodies.

Long-range planning with a General Plan will help the Castle Valley Planning and Land Use Commission and the Castle Valley Town Council to:

- set Town-wide goals that reflect the desires of residents and property owners.
- anticipate and prepare for the future.
- establish sound policies for land use.
- assure efficient use of limited public funds.
- promote the health, safety and welfare of all residents and property owners.
- formulate appropriate land use ordinances.

General Plan Implementation

In order to ensure that the General Plan reflects the changing needs of residents and landowners, it shall be the policy of the Planning and Land Use Commission and the Town Council that:

1. The Castle Valley General Plan will be implemented by a zoning ordinance, a capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance or other ordinances, regulations, studies, or programs as deemed appropriate by the Town Council, including recommendations by the Planning and Land Use Commission.
2. All ordinance changes, re-zonings, or improvement programs shall be in compliance with the expressed policies contained in the Castle Valley General Plan, Utah State Code, and applicable federal policies, and be subject to public hearings.

3. The General Plan shall receive a comprehensive review approximately every five years to assure that its policies, programs, and future goals are consistent in reflecting the goals and needs of the Town residents and property owners.
4. Requests for General Plan amendment and review may be made by the general public in March and September of each calendar year. The burden of establishing that any amendment to the General Plan is in the best interest of the Town shall rest on the applicant, who must demonstrate that the change will promote the general welfare of the Town and will not result in a decrease in the quality of life in Castle Valley.
5. Local talents and expertise of residents and property owners will be utilized to inform the greater community on issues outlined in this General Plan whenever possible.

Nature of the Town

From a planning standpoint, the 2025 survey data articulate an unmistakable mandate: keep what makes and maintains Castle Valley as it is, with its quiet natural beauty, dark skies, spacious lots, non-intrusive values, and self-governed Township, with modernization efforts pursued only when it safeguards—not alters—those traits.

Quantifiable survey results can be distilled to this prioritized hierarchy of civic values:

1. Protect water (quality + aquifer);
2. Preserve space, quiet, and dark skies;
3. Maintain existing zoning and scenic integrity;
4. Then consider environmental innovation and community programs.

The 2020 U. S. Census reported the population of the Town of Castle Valley at 348 as compared to the 2010 Census at 319. This update predates the 2030 Census. Fifty-one percent (51%) of survey respondents were full-time residents of the Town; thirty-two percent (32%) were part-time residents; sixteen percent (16%) were non-resident property owners; and a half percent (0.5%) were renters. Thus, the Town is composed of many properties that are either vacation or second homes. The 2020 U.S. Census also showed the following demographics for Town residents:

Male	212
Female	136
Under 18	45
20-34 years old	9
35-49 years old	60
50-64 years old	30
65 years old & over	204

<p>The 2020 census did not enumerate individually by race, only showing Castle Valley as 100% White.</p>
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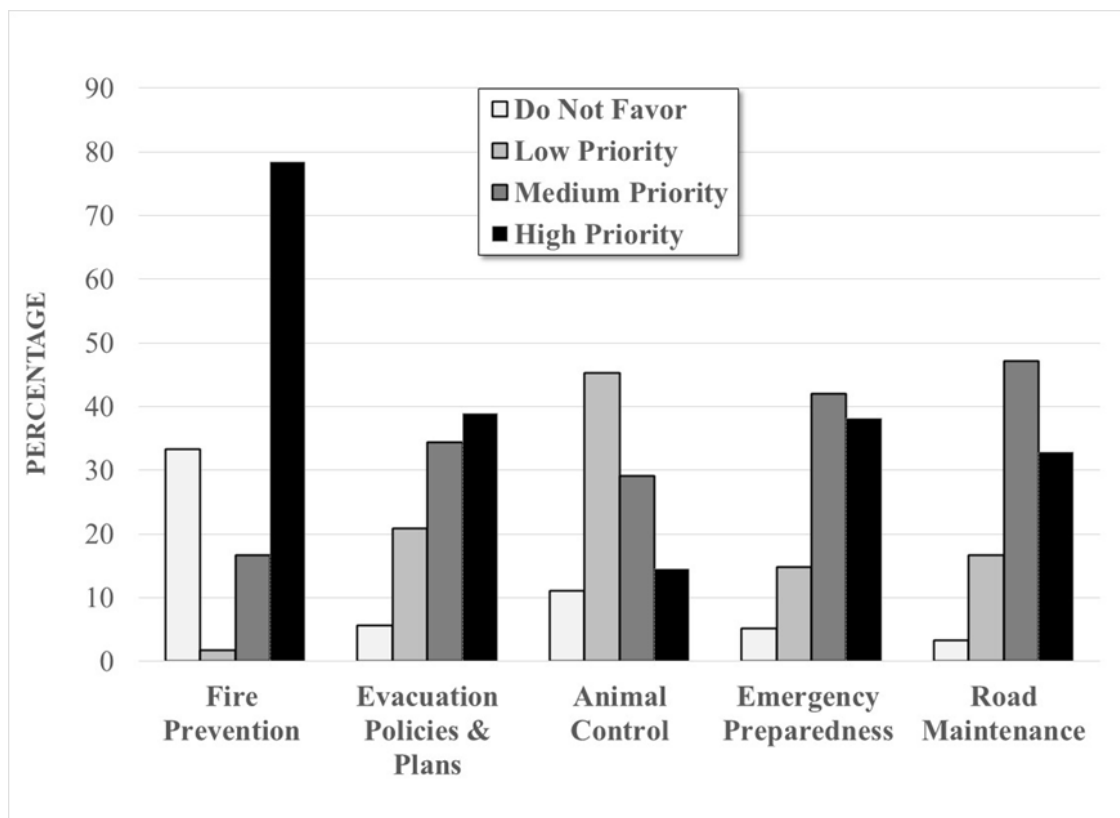
In August 2025, the Planning and Land Use Commission conducted a Town survey of all current full-time residents, part-time residents, and non-resident property owners. Recipients were informed that its purpose was to gather information from the community as part of the Town’s General Plan review and update process, which is done about every five years. A survey

was mailed to the property owners of record.¹ Of the surveys mailed, 189 were returned. One notable change was that residents are becoming older. The median age of all respondents to the survey was 67 years. Of residents, the median age was 62. This is a result of two trends: (1) long-term residents aging, many now in their 60s or 70s, and (2) residents having moved into Castle Valley after they have completed their paid work life. Some authorities refer to this aging trend as a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC). Yet, “retirement” does not realistically convey the multiple activities of Castle Valley residents.

The most common household size of all respondents was two people (67%); the next most common size was one person in the household (22%). Of all respondents, one household was the largest, at 11 members.

Seventy-six percent (76%) of respondents have permanent housing in Castle Valley and eighty-two percent (82%) obtain their water from a well.

Past Town surveys conducted in 1987, 1996, 2001, 2007, 2012, and 2019 have shown that the vast majority of both residents and all property owners wish to preserve the unique quality of life in Castle Valley and have been opposed to commercial and industrial development. Findings from the 2025 survey affirm similar attitudes and many of the same values reflected in past surveys.



Survey Question H2: Which issues do you believe the Town should make a high priority to develop or improve upon?

¹ Property owners with multiple lots received only one survey. If a second adult in a household wished to complete a survey, they were permitted to do so. Eight second-household surveys were returned and those findings were incorporated into the overall data.

The 2025 Town survey revealed that residents and property-owners value Castle Valley for its natural beauty and open space, quiet and tranquility, strong sense of community and friendly people, dark night skies, rural atmosphere, privacy, and remoteness. The unique natural setting is a primary factor in the quality of life in the Town. Enjoyment of the natural surroundings is inherent to the character of the Town.

The 2025 Town survey again found that property owners placed a high value on protecting open spaces, the integrity of the natural landscape, and the natural and scenic resources of the area. The 2025 Town survey reflected particular emphasis on maintaining dark skies (76%) and fire prevention and preparedness (78%).

While there are diverse notions of how a sustainable community might be defined, the most applicable definition for the purposes of this General Plan includes those practices that enhance and preserve the natural and scenic environment and the natural resources and environmental quality of our community for future generations. Sustainability applies to the natural, social, economic, and built environments that are shaped by human impact. The following examples illustrate sustainable practices and policies included throughout this General Plan:

- Ensure a long-term, sustainable drinking water supply by protecting the Town’s uncontained aquifer from identifiable contaminants and through water conservation efforts.
- Maintain the 5-acre minimum size for lots and only one dwelling per lot.
- Support low-impact agriculture and livestock activities.
- Provide a level of services for citizens that assures efficient use of limited public funds.

One of the ongoing challenges facing the Town of Castle Valley is recruiting and retaining skilled employees and volunteers for Town government and related committees. Over past years, many longer-term residents have served in some capacity in the Town government. The 2025 Town survey found only 19% of respondents said “Yes” to the question of whether they would consider serving the Town government in some capacity. Yet many respondents expect the Town to do more than it currently does, especially in terms of enforcement of existing ordinances and road maintenance.

Community Activities

Castle Valley is more than just a municipality. Numerous groups, clubs, events, and activities are held throughout the year and serve the many interests of property owners. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is a focal point for many residents. With the exception of summer months, it hosts a monthly community potluck dinner. Also meeting monthly throughout the year are a photography group, a book group, an art group, a women's group, a hiking group, and the monthly movie group. Ping pong and yoga are frequently scheduled. The annual October Gourd Festival (which changed its name to the Gourds & More Festival in 2023) has been held for 22 years, and attracts visitors from Moab and far beyond. Its festivities include booths for sale of gourds and local arts and crafts, a parade led by the Gourdess of the Year and her giant consort Gourdy, live music, a potluck lunch, a puppet show, and many other activities for adults and children. For the past two years, a 4th of July pancake

breakfast with a parade has been organized by supporters of the Castle Valley Fire District. They hope it will become an annual event. Another popular event recently added has been “Coffee with the Chief” every Monday morning, hosted by Castle Valley Fire Chief Ron Drake. An annual community-sponsored Veterans Day event has been well attended the last several years.

Within the Castle Valley Community Center, the Grand County Library provides services for Castle Valley and surrounding areas. In 2025, 1,288 patron visits to the Castle Valley Library were recorded and 2,110 books, DVDs, and other materials were checked out. In addition, the Castle Valley Library provides access to laptop computers and wi-fi internet access. The Library sponsors the monthly Castle Valley Movie Night. Past activities have included presentations on topics of community interest, films, star-gazing, a bridge group, and children’s story hour. New activities may be added to meet community interests. Individuals may also reserve the Community Center for locally-generated programs, such as Dark Sky programs.

Most people in Castle Valley enjoy outdoor recreation, from walks to longer hikes, mountain biking, rafting, horseback riding, fishing, and similar activities. The varied landscape surrounding Castle Valley provides these and other opportunities for people and is one of the reasons we value owning property here. Many people grow gardens and tend orchards that provide vegetables and fruit for themselves and neighbors. A few residents raise livestock.

Town Achievements

Since the 2020 General Plan update, a number of changes have occurred in the Town. Among the achievements are:

- Extended east Shafer Lane to the Castleton Road for emergency use.
- Completed the Placer Creek Low Water Crossing.
- Adopted the Dark Sky Lighting Ordinance.
- Achieved certification as an International Dark Sky Community.
- Funded the *Hydrogeologic Study of Castle Valley, Grand County, Utah*, a comprehensive water study conducted by the Utah Geological Society.
- Updated the Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2020 and again in 2025.
- Adopted an Emergency Operations Plan.
- Clarified language in several ordinances and forms.
- Updated the Subdivision Ordinance.
- Provided ongoing training for Town employees and members of the Town Council and the Planning and Land Use Commission.
- Assured that the Town budget is spent efficiently.

General Plan

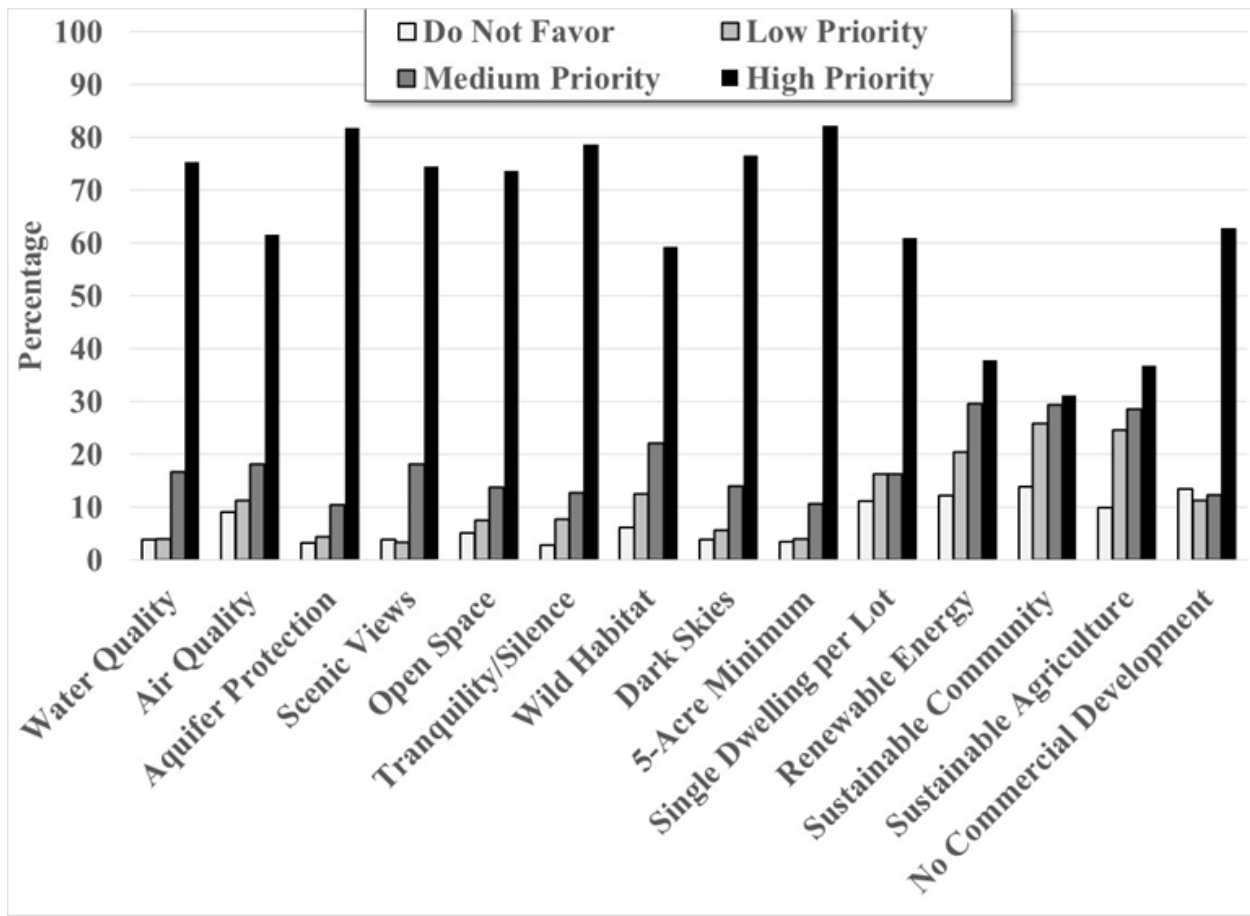
This Castle Valley General Plan is divided into the following sections. Each section includes a short narrative, overarching goals, and policies:

- 1) Community Goals
- 2) Land Use
- 3) Housing
- 4) Transportation and Roads

- 5) Water and Waste-Water Disposal Systems
- 6) Fire Protection and Emergency Preparedness
- 7) Environmental Concerns
- 8) Town Government

1) COMMUNITY GOALS

Castle Valley is surrounded by large tracts of open space and minimally developed public land that provide a natural setting, integral to the character of the Town. The sensitive nature of the land and water of Castle Valley and the effects of climate change call for creative and new ways of managing Town and surrounding lands and our local and global environments. As in past General Plan updates, the 2025 Town survey showed a continued appreciation of the viewshed and open space, quiet and tranquil environment, strong sense of community, clean water and air, and diverse lifestyles.



Survey Question H1: Which community values and policies do you believe the Town should continue to protect and maintain?

Property owners and residents expressed a strong desire to preserve these unique qualities of life. All ordinances will be carefully crafted and enforced with the following goals in mind:

- Preserve and enhance Castle Valley as a scenic, rural, residential/agricultural community.
- Protect the unique character and scale of the Town, including the absence of commercial store-front businesses.

- Protect our clean water and air.
- Protect the quality of life, viewshed, sense of open space, and dark night skies.
- Preserve the strong sense of community and diversity of lifestyles.
- Protect, wherever practicable, persons and property from unreasonable exposure to hazards, potential disasters, and identifiable vulnerabilities such as wildfires.

2) LAND USE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Castle Valley is a rural residential and agricultural community, made up of five-acre-minimum lots with single-family homes and accessory buildings in association with low-impact agricultural uses. The Town currently allows home and premises businesses to operate with a conditional use permit, but no other commercial or industrial activity is permitted (with the exception of the Castle Valley Inn which operates under a contract with the Town). As of January 27, 2026, there were 20 Home and Premises Occupations registered in the Town.

A large parcel of unplatted public land exists as undeveloped open space in the upper part of the valley within Town boundaries. It is zoned as Range and Grazing with fifteen-acre minimum lot sizes required if ever subdivided and developed. A majority of respondents to Town surveys, including 2025, favor preserving these lands as open space and keeping them from being developed.

The Town's boundaries include lands owned by the Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Utah Open Lands (UOL) that are open to hunting, some of which abut or surround residential areas. As the population has grown in the upper valley, conflicts have increased. The Town has sought to mitigate conflicts between residents and public land users by adopting an ordinance in 1998 which was amended in 2007 (Ordinance 2007-7 Regarding Hunting and Discharge of Firearms Within the Boundaries of the Town of Castle Valley, which restricted firearm uses on privately owned property and limited hunting on federal land to archery only.

The Town has a modest level of public facilities and services. The Community Center was built on the Town lot in 2004 and serves as a gathering place for community and Town government events. The Town building houses the Town office, meeting rooms, and a branch of the Grand County Public Library. The Town lot is home to a fire station owned and managed by the Grand County Special Service Area for Castle Valley Fire Protection, a shed for Roads Department equipment, a basketball/pickleball court, an outdoor picnic area, and playground equipment. The Town has a small part-time staff. The Town has a cemetery that is maintained by the Grand County Cemetery District. There is no municipal water delivery system or wastewater treatment facility, nor is there any municipal garbage removal service for residents. Optional garbage and recycling pickup services are provided by private companies. Improvements in electrical infrastructure are currently being made by Rocky Mountain Power (RMP). River Canyon Wireless installed fixed wi-fi to Castle Valley in 2017, and fiber optic internet/phone service through Emery Telecom was installed throughout the Town during 2020 and 2021.

GOALS

- Remain a peaceful, quiet rural residential/agricultural community characterized by scenic views, a sense of open space, clean water and air, and the ability to enjoy wildlife, landscape, and dark skies. Enable residents to work at home and grow food locally while protecting our aquifer and the character, scale, and residential/rural atmosphere of the Town.
- Strive to achieve a reasonable balance between residential and agricultural values.

POLICIES

1. All lots in the Rural Agricultural Residential Zone will remain 5 acres or more including easements, with no more than one dwelling permitted on each lot (there was strong support for this in the 2025 Survey). In the Range and Grazing Zone, no future subdivided lot shall be permitted to be developed at an average density greater than one single-family dwelling per 15-acre minimum lot.
2. No land within the Town will be zoned for any commercial or industrial purpose.
3. The Town will improve its standards for home-based businesses and other activities conducted on occupied lots in order to ensure the following: low impact on neighbors, compatibility with residential uses, fire prevention and protection, and aquifer protection.
4. The Town will streamline and simplify the conditional use permit process, in part by replacing routine conditional use permits for home or premises occupations with standardized permitted uses and operating standards.
5. The Town will define and promote low-impact agriculture and support small-scale production for home consumption and local markets. Due to strong support in the 2019 Survey, the Town undertook revision of livestock limits, the goal being to balance property rights with realistic preservation of aquifer protection, vegetation, environmental, and residential values.
6. The Town will improve coordination and consultation with private landowners and with the various agencies and entities that have authority over adjacent lands in order to encourage land use practices that are compatible with the Town's approach to land use, including interest in: air quality and a peaceful and quiet atmosphere; water conservation, availability, quality, and drainage; all to be consistent with the Subdivision Ordinance 2004-3.
7. Open space shall be preserved to ensure the rural residential nature of the Town of Castle Valley, especially along the greenbelt parcels owned by the Town and unplatted areas within the Town boundaries. The Town will explore or discuss options, as needed, regarding undeveloped lands in Castle Valley (i.e., conservation easements, memoranda of understanding with agencies, purchase, or annexation) in order to exert greater influence over lands and potential uses or activities that could impact the quality of life in Castle Valley.
8. The Town will work with local service providers to enhance the efficiency of our telephone and internet services.
9. The Town will maintain policies and practices that protect the viewshed, such as the underground electric utility installation requirement, height restrictions, and the combined square footage maximum for buildings.

3) HOUSING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The 2020 US Census stated that the population of the Town of Castle Valley was 348. It also stated that the Town has 314 housing units occupied by resident property owners; 20 (7%) resident renters; and 116 (37%) lots that are non-occupied because of seasonal/occasional use or are vacant. Castle Valley currently has 435 privately owned residential lots. Building activity has increased substantially over the past five years since the last General Plan was created. The median age of residents in Castle Valley is almost 69. The survey asked how concerned people are about aging in place or staying in their homes with a major health challenge; 175 replies broke down as follows:

Not concerned	22	13%
Low concern	55	31%
Medium concern	54	31%
High concern	44	25%

As might be expected, 99 of 175 replies (56%) had medium or high concern about aging/health. There is again a split low level of support overall for public transportation to and from Moab, and for an available visiting nurse, which is an increase from previous surveys. There is still very little support for commercial development or formal senior housing.

According to the federal government definition, a community in which 40% of the heads of household are “older individuals” living in a community that was not specifically planned or designed to meet the needs of seniors living independently in their homes can be considered a NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community). Healthy NORCs place great emphasis on features such as walkability and social activities. Supportive services are created to maximize the health and well-being of resident seniors so they can maintain their independence and comfortably remain in their homes as they age in place. These programs are generally funded by a mix of public and private sources. A formal designation as a NORC could help the Town obtain grants and services. The Town could create a committee or a nonprofit organization to explore this avenue.

GOALS

- Craft building requirements for houses and other structures in a way that guards the health, safety and welfare of residents and property owners.
- Design Craft building requirements for houses and other structures in a way that preserves the values of viewshed, open space, aquifer protection, quiet rural atmosphere, and privacy.
- Manage growth of the community in a way that preserves a wide variety of housing types and a diversity of economic, social, and age groups.
- Encourage water, energy, and resource conserving technologies and practices such as the following: energy efficient structures, green building standards, passive solar orientation and glare reduction in existing and future development, and rainwater harvesting and gray water usage that is in compliance with all applicable State regulations.

- Continue permitting modern modular housing and tiny houses as a way of encouraging younger individuals and families to settle in the Town.

POLICIES

1. In May 2008, the Town Council implemented a Combined Square Footage maximum for all buildings on a lot, along with new building height restrictions. This regulation was enacted in order to protect a sense of open space and the viewshed in the Town. The Combined Square Footage maximum for all buildings on a lot shall remain in effect.
2. Dwellings which have been determined by the Grand County Building Inspector to endanger the public health, safety, or welfare, will be “red-tagged” for demolition.
3. The Town will improve and enforce its policies prohibiting the alteration of natural drainages by requiring approval for any building or surface alteration that has a direct or indirect impact upon drainage channels and/or town easements.
4. The Town will create regulations for group homes for the disabled because such homes are required to allow for them by federal law.
5. The Town will continue to support and enforce the current Ordinance 85-3, Section 4.4 Prohibited Uses for RAR-1 AND RG-15 Zones that establishes a minimum property rental period of 30 days.

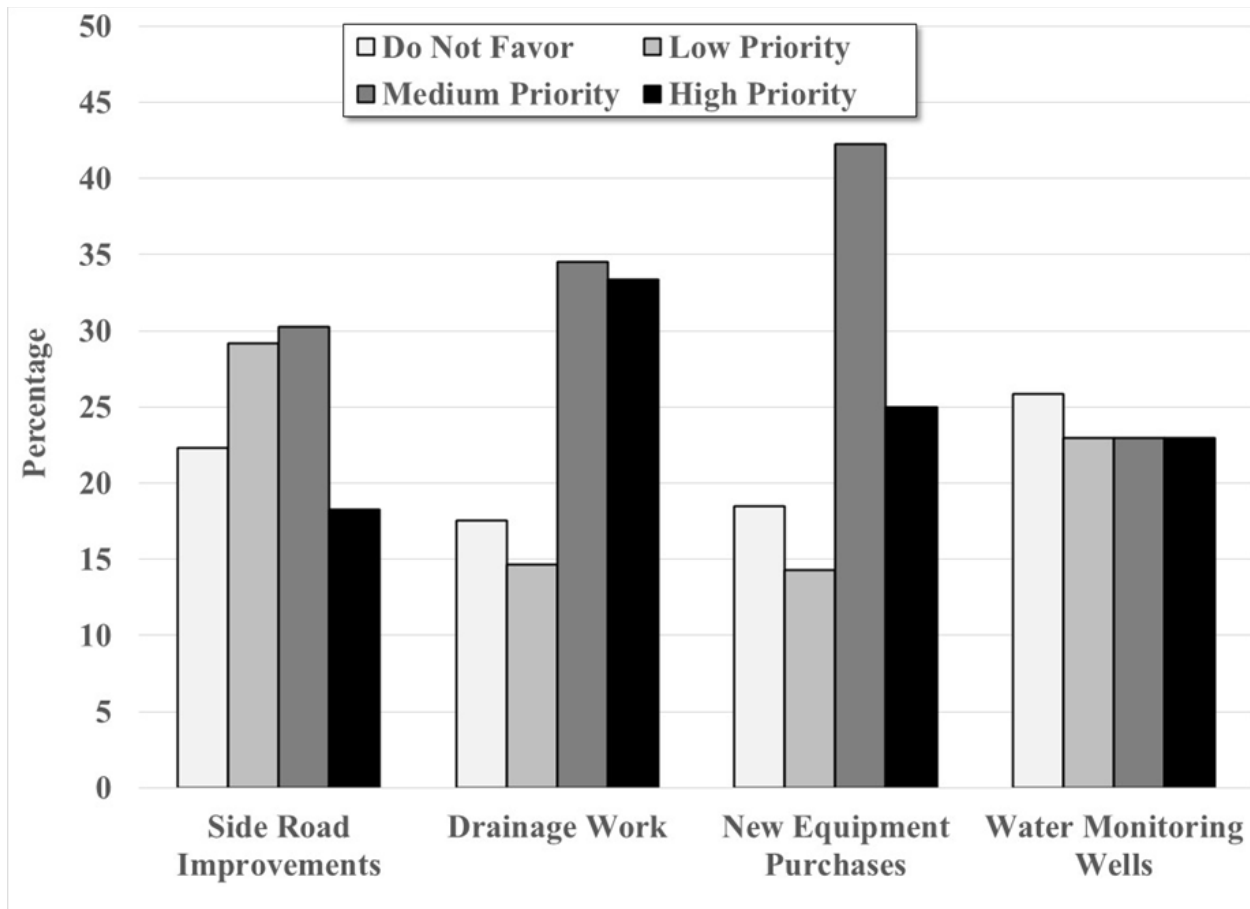
4) TRANSPORTATION AND ROADS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Castle Valley is served by County Road 96. State Highway 128, which is about 1.7 miles outside of the Town's municipal boundary, is the principal transportation access to the Town. Castle Valley Drive serves as the main road leading in and out of the Town. Shafer Lane has been upgraded and designated as an emergency ingress and egress road for emergency responders and for the public should Castle Valley Drive become impassable. Castle Valley Drive is the only paved (chip sealed) Town road and is paved for the first 4.67 miles. The remaining portion is gravel and dirt. All other Town roads, either crowned dirt and/or gravel, are approximately 17 miles in combined length. Roads on the west side of Castle Valley Drive proceed to the base of Porcupine Rim. This results in progressively steeper grades, some exceeding 20%, making winter maintenance difficult and in some cases, impossible.

The Town Road Department is responsible for maintenance and improvements of all Town roads and for all drainages within the Town's easements. This includes flood control, dirt work, signage for all Town roads, snow removal for dirt roads that receive winter maintenance, and Town vehicle and equipment maintenance and repair. Castle Valley contracts with the Grand County Road Department to provide winter snow removal from Castle Valley Drive, due to a lack of suitable equipment and because it is far less expensive than acquiring and maintaining the equipment needed. Chip sealing of Castle Valley Drive is subcontracted to a private entity.

Dirt and gravel roads are highly susceptible to erosion and therefore require extensive maintenance. The chip seal pavement is approximately 1 inch in thickness, without road base, which causes structural weakness, cracking, and surface failure. Two streams pass through the Town boundaries: Castle Creek which is perennial and Placer Creek which is intermittent. Numerous drainage channels begin within or pass through the Town's boundaries, feeding into Castle Creek or Placer Creek which merge within the Town. Seasonal storms present numerous challenges as runoff can be excessive and destructive, threatening both surface access and private property.



Survey Question G3: Prioritize projects that may require additional taxes or fees.

The Castle Valley Town Council provides direction and sets priorities for the maintenance of the Town's roads and related drainages within the framework of the Town's annual budget.

GOALS

- To improve and actively maintain our road and storm drainage infrastructure.
- To maintain and expand its capital outlay for road improvement projects.

POLICIES

1. The Town Council will define, prioritize, and implement projects, based on annual budgets to: 1) make road improvements and 2) identify and address areas of potential storm flood erosion which may threaten or damage Castle Valley roads.
2. The Town will assure through a well-equipped and well-staffed Road Department that roads, culverts, bar ditches, etc. are properly maintained.

3. The Town will continue to make it a budgetary policy, when available, to annually set aside funds in a Capital Account for periodic repaving and the ongoing maintenance of Castle Valley Drive.
4. The existing restricted emergency access on Shafer Lane will continue to be maintained and further developed as an emergency egress and ingress for the public.
5. Future road easement encroachments must receive written approval by the Town prior to any work being done.
6. The Town will purchase, rent, or lease needed equipment for the Road Department.

5) WATER AND WASTE WATER DISPOSAL SYSTEMS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Water is provided through individual wells and waste is managed by individual septic wastewater disposal systems. Castle Valley's aquifer is the sole source of drinking water for its residents and an irreplaceable resource. There is no reasonable alternative source available at an economical cost and contamination of this source would pose a significant hazard to public health.

In 1996, the Town passed a Watershed Protection Ordinance (96-1). The Town is committed to working with private landowners, agencies, and authorities that own property in the Castle Valley Watershed to protect water quality and availability.

Our aquifer is extremely vulnerable to contamination. It is an unconsolidated valley-fill type and exposed at the surface with no overlying confining geologic formation. This allows contaminants to move more quickly downward to the water supply. Past and current surveys have shown that respondents consider aquifer protection a high priority as well as protection for Castle Creek, Placer Creek, all surface waters, and the artesian spring surface water from nitrate and other possible contaminants.

The Castle Valley Aquifer was declared a Sole Source Aquifer by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency² in 2012 and classified by the Utah Geological Survey³ as "pristine" in certain areas. However, water quality varies with a wide range of potability and usability in different parts of the Town. About 40% of the Town's lots have very hard water that must be purified in order to drink and some lots do not have access to potable water. The Town now has six monitoring wells for measuring water table levels and quality changes over time and publishes the data from semi-annual sampling on its website on an annual basis.

In March of 2025, the Town Council approved the Town of Castle Valley Water Management Plan (Res 2025-1). This plan, considered to be a living document requiring periodic revisions, attempts to identify current and anticipated future issues and to propose action and policies that will help ensure that the Town is prepared to continue fulfilling its mandate to protect water rights and the Castle Valley watershed.

In November 2025, the Town Council passed Ordinance 2025-1 creating the Water Advisory Committee (WAC) which works to provide advice and support to the Town Council in its efforts to protect water rights, the aquifer, and the Castle Valley watershed for the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. The WAC was formed to identify, research, and discuss water-related issues, with the goal of creating a Water Management Plan for the Town. After much work and several drafts, the Plan was approved by the Town Council and published in 2025. It can be viewed on the Town website.

In recent years the Town has overseen extensive study and mapping of the Castle Valley aquifer, starting with the completion of final components of the Hydrologic Assessment of the Surface Water and Groundwater Resources of Castle Valley Utah (HESA) study done by Hydrologic Systems Associates. That was followed by arranging a peer review of the HESA study by a Utah Geological Survey (UGS) scientist and meetings with Division of Water Rights

² Environmental Protection Agency, August 6, 2001, Sole source aquifer Notice of final determination for the Castle Valley Aquifer System, Castle Valley, UT: Environmental Protection Agency, (FRL-7024-2).

³ Utah Geological Survey, 2004, Ground-Water Quality Classification and Recommended Septic Tank Soil-Absorption-System Density Maps, Castle Valley, Grand County Utah, (Special Study 113).

personnel to determine further data and modeling needed for a comprehensive understanding of the Castle Valley aquifer. This became the foundation for a “water budget” study done by UGS, which required two years of extensive work and culminated in the publication of the UGS *Hydrogeologic Study of Castle Valley, Grand County, Utah (2025)*.

The Town owns four large water rights which it holds for current use and the long-term development of the Town. With proper management, the Town believes there will be sufficient water rights for all future development in the Town. The State has designated the Town of Castle Valley as a Public Water Supplier. The Town Council has developed procedures to promote efficient management of its water rights. Property owners must sign a Water Use Agreement and Permit with the Town and are allocated a portion of the Town’s water rights so they may drill wells and use water for domestic, irrigation, and stock watering purposes. At the time of this update, 167 lots have a Water Use Agreement and Permit with the Town. Of those, 40 lots also have state-issued water rights, and there are 81 lots that have only state issued water rights. There are 141 lots that currently have no water rights but may obtain an allocation of Town rights in the future.

GOALS

- Maintain water quality and availability in the Watershed by expanding our knowledge, developing policies, and taking action as needed.
- Provide oversight to ensure that our sole source “pristine” drinking water resource is available for future generations. (See Appendix III for a map of the Castle Valley Watershed).
- Remain diligent, as a Public Water Supplier, in allocating and tracking the use of the Town’s water rights.
- Develop appropriate procedures for monitoring and maintaining septic health on Town lots.

POLICIES

1. The Town will use existing data and collect new data in order to monitor water quality availability.
2. The Town will develop regulations that protect and maintain our water quality and availability.
3. The Town will continue to identify and address potential hazards and contaminants to our drinking water supply through public awareness, incentives, and/or regulations to mitigate their impacts.
4. The Town will continue to provide information to residents and property owners regarding the best septic system maintenance practices and promote public awareness through the Town’s website and handouts with new septic permits.
5. The Town will inform residents and property owners of any new septic regulations adopted by the State of Utah.
6. The Town will inform residents and property owners of the geologic properties and vulnerability of the Town of Castle Valley aquifer, best water conservation practices, best practices regarding the disposal and management of household hazardous materials

- (motor oil, pesticides, electronics, pharmaceuticals), and make recommendations for alternative least toxic and non-toxic household and gardening products.
7. The Town will explore ways to prohibit large-scale use of pesticides, especially in areas that drain into any open waterway or natural stream such as Castle Creek.
 8. The Town will ensure that ordinances are developed to protect the flow and quality of open waterways, natural streams, and other drainages from agricultural and livestock runoff.
 9. The Town will update its Watershed Protection Plan and implement/enforce the Existing Watershed Protection Ordinance (96-1). The Town will clarify and implement the permit process required before any developments or activities occur that have the potential to pollute the Watershed recharge area. The Town will coordinate Memoranda of Understanding with regional water stakeholders to implement this permit process.
 10. The Town will actively promote cooperation among all regional water stakeholders to achieve a watershed protection management plan, to be applied to the Watershed recharge area as identified and mapped in the Town's U.S. Sole Source Aquifer determination. The plan should address water quantity and climate change probabilities, sustainable water use, wastewater and storm water management, protection of water quality, flood prevention, and the protection of wildlife and vegetation along riparian habitats.
 11. The Town will actively participate in County, State, and Federal land use planning processes to ensure that any proposed developments/activities in the Castle Valley Watershed are thoroughly reviewed by the Town to meet watershed protection goals. This may include researching and seeking a Municipal Watershed designation for the Castle Valley Watershed with the appropriate County, State and Federal entities.
 12. The Town will seek to be included in the Grand County Watershed Protection Overlay District now being planned by Grand County and will seek specific protections that address the characteristics of the Castle Valley watershed.
 13. The Town will use the EPA designation of a sole source aquifer to maximum advantage in protecting our watershed.
 14. The Town will track/review water applications within the watershed and will protest as per State law any application that proposes to expand the amount of water rights available within the Town or has the potential to jeopardize the availability and quality of the water used by Town residents.
 15. The Town will encourage enforcement of County, State and Federal regulations and policies throughout the watershed that protect our water quality and availability.
 16. The Town will, as a Public Water Supplier, maintain its water rights and continue to make them available for property owners and may research the practicalities, costs, and benefits of becoming a Municipal Water Provider. It is understood that a typical piped distribution system is impractical in the Town due to the low connection density, but the Town may explore the development of a municipal well and self-fill facility as a means of providing potable or non-potable water to residents living on lots that have no well, a poorly producing well, or poor quality water.
 17. The Town will continue to implement policies to support the viability of individual water supply systems and state-approved individual waste disposal systems.
 18. The Town will continue to implement the provisions of its Water Management Plan and will periodically review and update the Plan.

6) FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

EXISTING CONDITIONS: FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Town and outlying areas are served by the Grand County Special Service Area for Castle Valley Fire Protection (“Castle Valley Fire District”), founded in 1982, which funds and manages the Castle Valley Volunteer Fire Department. Both entities are administered by the Castle Valley Fire Commission, a three-member elected Board. Castle Valley has received Firewise Communities/USA recognition status for over 20 years. On behalf of Castle Valley, the Castle Valley Fire District maintains this status with its annual membership in Firewise Communities, a project of the National Fire Protection Association. The Fire District is a separate governing and revenue-raising entity from the Town of Castle Valley, but both work closely together to promote fire prevention and protection.

The Castle Valley Fire District (CVFD) is an all-volunteer force of 18 people. The Fire District maintains nine fire-fighting engines. The newest addition is a new Ford F550 500-gallon tank brush truck/wildland fire engine, purchased in 2022 with generous donations from property owners. Additional donations recently provided funds for repair of the Fire District's 2005 International Pumper Tanker. Training for members of the Fire District occurs at semi-monthly meetings. In 2019 the Fire District acquired a lot at the corner of Castle Valley Drive and Chamisa Lane with a large well, thereby providing a ready source of water for the engines. The Fire District’s long-term goal is to build a firehouse on the property. Recruitment, especially of younger members, is a challenge.

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the Castle Valley Fire District was updated in 2024. The CWPP is administered by the Town of Castle Valley. CWPP identifies policies and action strategies for reducing potential loss of life and property in the community due to wildfire. Program goals include community and residential hazard and risk assessments, coordination of fire prevention and protection resources, public education, and implementation of fuels reduction strategies. In addition, the Town entered into a cooperative grant agreement with the State which requires the Town to create a wildland urban interface map in compliance with House Bill 48 designating levels of fire risk within Town boundaries.

The Castle Valley Fire District maintains an emergency satellite telephone service at the Community Center for residents whenever there is a prolonged power or telephone outage.

Castle Valley is in a wildland urban interface – a place where residential areas border and interact with undeveloped wildland vegetation. Fire is a very serious hazard in Castle Valley, especially given the annual and widespread presence of cheatgrass and Russian thistle (tumbleweeds) across the valley. These conditions, combined with periods of prolonged drought, present a number of fire-fighting challenges due to Town and residential proximity to large areas of fire-prone vegetation. Trees, shrubs, grasses, and weeds all provide significant fuel for fires; winds, topography, and difficulty of access add to fire hazards. Periods of drought, invasive vegetation, and modern fire suppression practices have helped to increase heavily overgrown areas of dry combustible vegetation. During “monsoon” season, frequent thunderstorms and cloudbursts occur, posing a threat to life and property from lightning-triggered wildfires and debris flow (flood) events. All these existing threats will be enhanced by climate change.

The Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands conducts Firewise inspections of owner’s property. The 2025 survey found that 40% of respondents have had such an inspection,

an increase of over 20% since 2019. Some of those property owners may be aware of Firewise prevention strategies (available on the Fire District website, <http://castlevalleyfire.org/>) and have taken appropriate measures to reduce risks on their properties, but a full Firewise inspection will further help. At the same time, over 95% of respondents to the 2025 survey indicated that fire prevention is of high or medium concern, a slight increase from the 2019 survey.

Both the Town and the Fire District regularly provide information to property owners on fire prevention resources and measures they can take. In addition, the Fire Commission will consider training Fire District members to conduct Firewise inspections, a service that over 87% of property owners said they would welcome or consider using, a 5% increase from 2019.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Two streams pass through the Town boundaries: Castle Creek which is perennial, and Placer Creek which is intermittent. Drainage along Castle and Placer Creeks presents a number of potential hazards for property owners and risks for emergency service responders. Flood runoff and erosion in these drainages may affect travel by residents and access for emergency vehicles. Heavy rains can result in the drainages and creeks flowing out of their banks or impacting culverts and ditches.

Residents with medical emergencies can experience a response time of 45 to 60 minutes as the Grand County Emergency Medical Service (EMS) travels from Moab to Castle Valley. An emergency helicopter contractor exists in Moab and has provided needed support in a number of situations.

The Town developed a Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2015 which was updated in 2020 and again in 2025. The Plan looks at a variety of potential threats to communities, including fire, flood, rock and landslides, and drought. The Plan outlines means to mitigate such threats, including describing resources available in the event of a hazard emergency. A copy of the 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan is available on the Town of Castle Valley website (<http://www.castlevalleyutah.com/hazard.cfm>).

New property owners are informed by the Town of risks from geologic hazards on individual lots, such as rock falls, flooding, soil problems, suitability, subsidence, or similar geologic hazard, as part of the building permit process and are required to sign a Geologic Hazards Release Agreement.

To expedite evacuations in the event of an extreme event, the Town has upgraded the east end of Shafer Lane to Fire Station 1. The extension is not open for regular use, but in emergencies, people can use the road to reach the Castleton Road.

GOALS

- Support the Castle Valley Fire District in its efforts to protect life and property within the Town and community.
- Improve fire prevention awareness among property owners and take steps that will help ensure that fire-fighting can be effective and safe for fire personnel.
- Update plans and projects, both immediate and long-term, to mitigate and respond to foreseeable emergency situations.
- Protect, wherever practicable, people and property from unreasonable exposure to hazards, potential disasters, and identifiable risks.

POLICIES

1. The Town will improve and maintain good relations with Castle Valley Fire District.
2. The Town will assist the Castle Valley Fire District in efforts to communicate information to citizens regarding fire prevention and protection actions they can take.
3. The Town will implement, wherever practicable, Town-financed actions regarding roads, mowing, etc. that would reduce fire hazards and/or improve fire-fighting.
4. The Town adopted the updated Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in 2024 to continue to encourage residents and property owners to implement Firewise practices on their properties, developed or otherwise. This will be accomplished through programs, incentives, and/or regulations. In 2026, the Town became the participating entity to sign a Cooperative Agreement with the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands. The Town will fulfill the Participating Commitments of this agreement through the updated 2026 Memorandum of Understanding with the Castle Valley Fire Protection District.
5. The Town will provide information to property owners regarding emergency policies and procedures, evacuation routes, and safety zones as described in the current Emergency Operation Plan (EOP).
6. The Town will support the Castle Valley Fire District decision to train its members to conduct Firewise prevention inspections for Town property owners and encourage property owners to take advantage of such a service.

7) ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Town surveys conducted since 1987 have repeatedly shown that residents and property owners have a strong desire to preserve Castle Valley’s natural beauty and peace and quiet, rural atmosphere, dark skies, and clean air and water. Responses from the 2025 Survey show strong support for strengthening the Town’s Lighting Ordinance of 2021. In 2023 the Town received official recognition as a Dark Sky Community from Dark Sky International.

Castle Valley is in a wildland urban interface- a place where residential areas border and impact native vegetation, wildlife habitats, and ecosystems. Its setting presents several human–environmental conflicts. Promotion of ecological principals and a conservation ethic have been reinforced through previous Town planning efforts and land use regulations to help minimize these conflicts.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has identified areas within the southern boundaries of the Town of Castle Valley as critical winter habitat for the La Sal Mountain Mule Deer herd. Land within the Town boundaries has been identified by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources as critical calving grounds for the La Sal Mountain Mule Deer herd. Safeguarding these areas as open lands is essential for protection of wildlife and for the preservation of our rural atmosphere.

Residents and property owners continued to show strong support for sustainable agriculture, sustainable community practices, and renewable energy as evidenced by the 2025 survey. In response to that historical support, the Town installed a solar array on the Town lot in May 2011, which provides a significant portion of the electric power for the community building. As part of its commitment to sustainable energy, the Town also subscribes to Rocky Mountain Power’s Blue Sky program which supports renewable energy at a fixed price.

In 2019 the Town passed a resolution to participate in the recently enacted Community Renewable Energy Act (HB 411). The Act provides a mechanism for qualifying counties, cities, and other municipalities within the State to achieve net-100% clean energy from renewable sources by 2030 for all RMP customers in their respective communities. In the years since 2019, the Town and eighteen (18) other communities (the Utah Renewable Communities “URC” worked in collaboration with RMP and developed a plan to achieve that goal. Since RMP’s Blue Sky Program was very limited and fully subscribed and since RMP elected not to solicit any new renewable sources for the foreseeable future. URC developed an approved solicitation and resource procurement process to secure the required renewable energy projects to supply net 100% renewable energy by 2030.

Encouraging the removal of noxious weeds such as cheat grass and tumbleweeds and the removal of excess vegetation that can fuel wildfires continues to be a priority for the Town. For the past few years, the Town has promoted the use of the state chipping program once or twice a year, depending on the availability of state funds, which not only reduces the fire danger from burning yard waste but also eliminates the smoke, soot, and other air pollutants released during those burns. The Town has also collaborated with the BLM to identify vegetation to be removed from land surrounding Round Mountain to reduce the fuel and potential for wildfires.

Responses from the 2025 survey regarding synthetic pesticides/herbicides reflect the community’s support for restricting their outdoor application within the Town’s boundaries. However, several respondents suggested that information on which toxins to avoid and

suggestions for safe alternatives would be a more practical approach and would avoid the difficulty of enforcement.

Generally, air quality is very good in the valley; however, local and regional emissions coupled with weather and inversion conditions create noticeable air quality issues. At this time, the Town does not have baseline data about how our airshed functions nor what the existing air quality conditions are.

GOALS

- Recognize the sensitive nature of the land and water of Castle Valley and the effects of climate change and growth by considering and encouraging policies and practices within our community that protect the quality of our water, air, soil, and wildlife as we plan for the future.
- Ensure a sustainable environment for current and future Town residents and property owners.
- Recognize and respond to local, regional, national, and global environmental issues that may affect the quality of life in the Town.

POLICIES

1. All household solid waste will be removed to a legal transfer station by a certified private waste carrier or by the homeowner in a timely manner.
2. The Town will strive to control and eradicate noxious weeds in Castle Valley through direct action and by providing relevant information to residents and property owners. Information shall focus on methods that prioritize non-toxic management of noxious weeds.
3. The Town Government shall be proactive in addressing both local and broader regional issues that have the potential to affect the quality of life in Castle Valley (i.e. water quality, air quality, rural character, peace and quiet, enjoyment of natural surroundings, sense of open space and viewshed) in collaboration with other conservation groups, responsible agencies, and regional stakeholders (BLM, US Forest Service, SITLA, Utah Open Lands.)
4. To protect the rural character and dark skies of Castle Valley, the Town will continue to enforce its Lighting Ordinance.
5. To help protect the diversity and health of local wildlife, the Fencing Ordinance, which limits the use of exclusionary fencing to encourage the movement of deer within the Town, will be improved and enforced.
6. The Town government will encourage energy conservation and promote the use of renewable energy sources. Pursuant to the resolution passed in December 2019, the Town will collaborate with RMP and the Utah Public Service Commission pursuant to HB 411 to achieve 100 percent of electrical energy from renewable resources by 2030.
7. The Town will promote policies and practices that protect air quality in the valley and will provide information to residents and property owners to help minimize and reduce personal contributions to air quality degradation. To reduce fire hazards, the Town will continue to promote the state chipping program.

8) TOWN GOVERNMENT

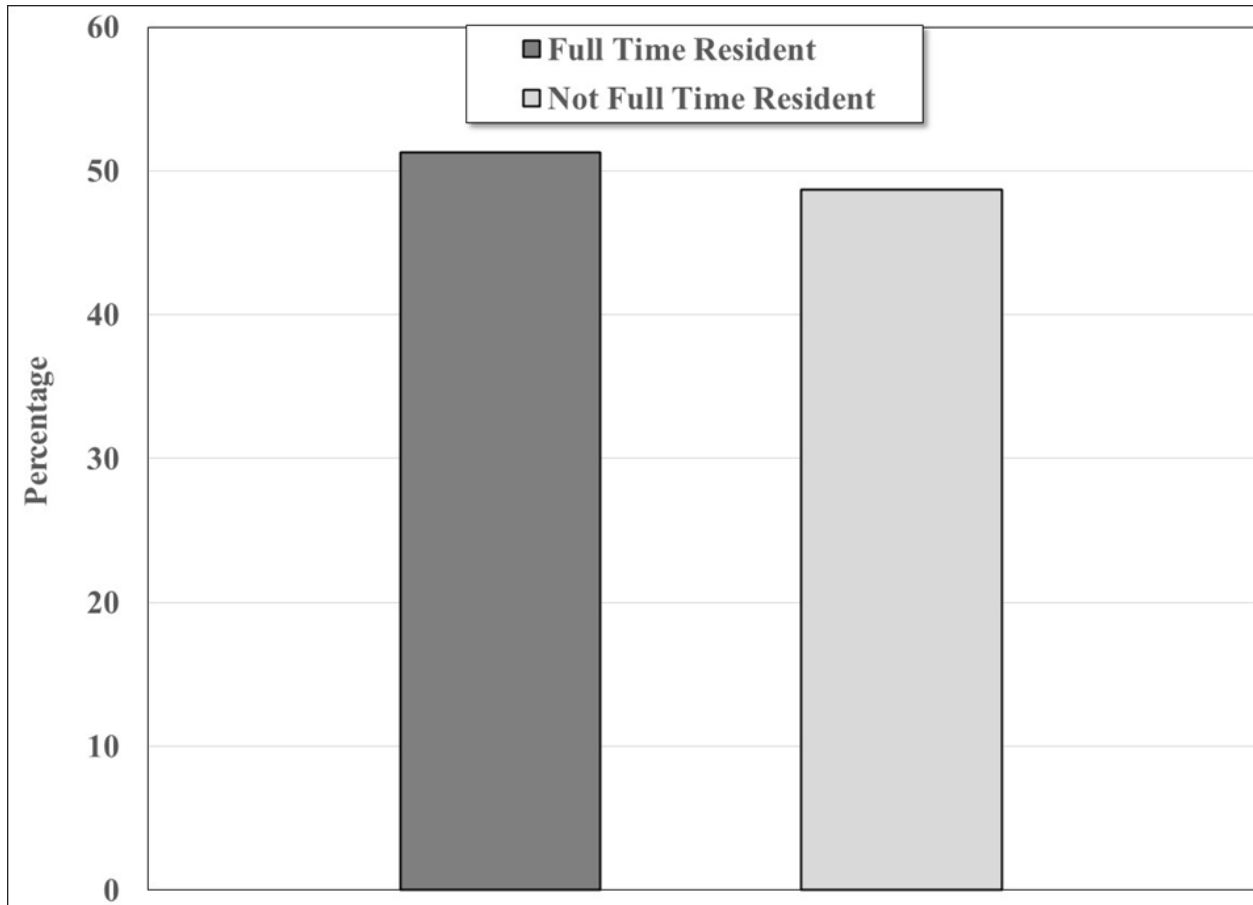
EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Town of Castle Valley was officially incorporated on July 26, 1985, and is classified as a Town by the Utah State Legislature, because it has a population under 1,000. A five-member council, which includes the Mayor as a full voting member, is the governing body. The Mayor is responsible for enforcing the laws and ordinances of the Town. There is a five-member Planning and Land Use Commission which has some responsibilities for overseeing land use issues and amending, updating, and revising land use ordinances.

In 2008 the Town adopted a complaint resolution process to assist the Mayor with enforcement. This policy seeks to solve ordinance violations first through discussion and mediation with property owners. If violations are not remedied in those ways, the Town has the option of issuing enforcement letters and injunctions, or fines. The complaint resolution process begins when a citizen files an anonymous complaint. This initiates a review process before a Complaint Resolution Board. As of the 2025 Survey, 58% are still satisfied with this policy, but there was support (86%) for additionally allowing the Town to initiate complaints, nearly 25% increase from 2019. There was less support for hiring a code enforcement officer (42%), a nearly 10% drop from 2019. Many residents expressed frustration about lack of enforcement and “toothless” ordinances.

The Town’s average budget over the last five years was \$395,114.00. Revenues from property taxes provide approximately 34% of this income. Other sources of revenue include the following: 20% from sales and miscellaneous tax, 27% from intergovernmental sources such as class “C” roads, 11% transferred from the previous year’s budget and capital funds savings, and an additional 8% from permit fees, donations, grants, and interest.

The Town spent an average of 53%, or \$209,935.00, on capital projects in those five years. The Town’s operating budget was an average of 47% of the budget, or \$185,179.00, with 20% going towards administration, 26% to basic roads (no capital projects), 6% to water and planning, 6% to community building, and 39% to our capital funds savings. The Town has a small population with limited capacity for future growth. It is actively working on increasing the property tax budget in 2026 by approximately \$75,000.00.



Survey Question E5: Do you favor raising property taxes, as needed?

A majority (63%) of respondents favored raising taxes as needed, given that Castle Valley receives such a minimal amount (~9%) of our Grand County property taxes each year. The tax rate was last raised in 2016. There was less support (52%) for raising taxes to hire more staff or increase pay and/or hours of current staff.

GOALS

- Ensure a Town government that implements this General Plan and other Town regulations in a manner that is effective, efficient, open, and fair.

POLICIES

1. The Town will continue to improve its administrative processes and will assure adequate training of Town officials and employees.
2. The Town will improve information available to the public by maintaining a well-designed website
3. The Town will continue to simplify its ordinances and forms and better provide residents and property owners with ways to understand and comply with those ordinances and forms more easily.

4. The Town will continue to improve and clarify language in its ordinances, forms, and contracts so as to reflect their true intent and meaning.
5. The Town will continue to investigate ways to improve its enforcement capabilities, assess and improve its use of the Complaint Resolution Process, and ensure the enforcement sections of all Town Ordinances are consistent with one another and conform to applicable requirements of Utah State Code.
6. The Town will seek through our Complaint Resolution Process and Nuisance Ordinance to help solve noise pollution issues that disturb the peace and quiet of neighbors.
7. The Town will continue to work with federal and state agencies to limit hunting to archery-only within the Town's boundaries to protect the health and safety of its residents and visitors.
8. The Town will continue to provide a modest level of services for its citizens, keeping Town staff and infrastructure at a minimum in order to ensure efficient use of limited public funds.