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VIRGIN TOWN 2018 GENERAL PLAN

Adopted xxxxxxxx

VISION STATEMENT

We will create a community that promotes a safe, comfortable, neighborly environment that adds to the beauty of the scenic surroundings by:

- Encouraging principles of abundance and collaboration for all citizens,
- Fostering a community with economic growth and stability for families to live in and enjoy,
- Providing opportunities for others from around the world to also enjoy the atmosphere and beauty of the area.

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INTRODUCTION

This Virgin General Plan is a guide for the present and future needs of the Town. It is a public document, which has been adopted by the Virgin Town Council and Virgin Town decision makers, as they move forward with development goals and consider future land use and other decision for the Town. This plan covers the entire Town with five elements Environmental, Land Use, Housing, Circulation, Economic and Infrastructure. Several open houses were conducted where the public was able to express their concerns and desires. This information was used to create this 2018 General Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT

Current Conditions

Virgin Town is at an elevation of 3,500 feet above sea level and the climate classification for Virgin is semi-arid or steppe which means, precipitation and temperature levels fall between desert and arid climates. Virgin receives approximately 12 inches of rainfall per year. In spite of the average rainfall at approximately one third of the national average, the Town has suffered numerous damaging flood events even in the last ten years. While envisioning responsible growth, Virgin does understand environmentally friendly growth is essential.

Preservation of the night sky and conserving energy continues to be a key aspect of Virgin's conservation focus.

Since the Town currently utilizes individual septic systems, soil limitations are important. Soil analysis show slight to moderate limitations for septic systems, however, a large area of Town needs to be considered on a case by case basis.

Desired

Preservation ~ During the public open houses, the importance to preserve the night sky and energy conservation were key aspects. These desires can be reached through ordinances promoting and encouraging the use of energy efficient devices, high building standards and alternative energy sources.

Sensitivity to the Environment ~ Building designs, site plans and subdivisions need to be sensitive to environmental preservation. It is also desired to designate areas of restricted development due to highly sensitive natural characteristics, such area may include significant ecological, archeological or water resources.

Integration

Goal: Preserve Character and Integrity of the Environment

- Encourage adequate Infrastructure to minimize environmental impact.
- Encourage sustainable development and building practices.

Goal: Encourage Conservation

- Encourage reduction of overall water consumption with site design and landscaping plans.
- Preserve natural drainage passages, or approved alternative diversions, to avoid flooding and require new development to maintain and enhance them while keeping safety as a high priority.
- Encourage conservation of sensitive lands through cooperation with private and public property owners.

Goal: Night Sky Preservation

- Set aside areas through cooperation with development interests as dark areas.
- Continue to restrict lighting to low, downward and efficient types to preserve the night sky while keeping safety and security in mind.

Goal: Views Preservation

- Encourage pleasant “viewsapes” where possible through thoughtful infrastructure and building construction.

LAND USE ELEMENT

Current Conditions

Most of the existing housing is of single-family developments. Currently, there is very little commercial development on SR-9, the main corridor going through Virgin Town. There is limited open access, through Town, to the Virgin River. There are currently no Town designated “trail” systems which could add to connectivity.

Desired

Private Property Protection ~ It is desired to continue the protection of constitutionally based private property rights so mandates and changes do not infringe on those lands and rights.

Highway Commercial and Non-Highway Commercial ~ Planned commercial along SR-9 and non-highway commercial should have access via foot and vehicle. But, during any design phase, all existing property rights need to be remembered and incoming businesses should have the option to help plan and decide roads within their property needs.

Orderly Growth ~ Permit orderly growth through synchronization of development with the availability of public facilities such as roads, water service, fire protection and other public services needed to support it. There is also the desire to encourage small interactive businesses to develop along the commercial corridor. To the greatest extent possible, encourage attractive development. Walkability will be important along with smooth traffic flow. The preparation of a plan for parks, trails and open space will guide the Town in these areas rather than development dictating to the Town when and where to provide these amenities.

Trails, Trailhead Improvements, River Access: A pedestrian friendly town is high priority while preserving Virgin Town’s natural settings, connecting neighborhoods to trailheads with some river access is also important.

Floodplain / Drainage Area Management ~ Building in floodplains/drainage areas needs to be managed through the development of a community wide floodplain and drainage master plan.

Economic Enhancements ~ Encourage responsible economic activities that will benefit all residents of the Town while retaining the atmosphere of the area. Promote the revitalization of historic buildings and focus on areas which serve as gateways to Virgin Town.

Integration

Goal: Economically Sustainable Development

- Utilize development impact fees to provide adequate public facilities and services in a timely manner.
- Require that adequate infrastructure exists or is programmed for construction within a defined period of time as a condition of development.

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- Pursue cooperation with governmental entities that administer and control areas bordering Virgin Town in regard to all policies and activities, which may have cross-boundary impacts.

Goal: Growth Management

- Encourage the development of RV Parks and camping in suitable areas to help mitigate BLM land long-term camping issues.
- Encourage the development of higher density, lower cost housing adjacent to the commercial zones where access to public infrastructure is most likely to occur.
- Encourage a tourist based commercial corridor primarily along SR-9 that could also bring benefit to residents.

Goal: Connectivity of Trails and Roads

- Encourage development of walking trails and roadway connectivity plans and amendments for new development.

Goal: Adoption and Amendments to Commercial Zones

- Mitigate the negative impacts on current development and residents.
- Capture tax and service revenues to benefit all residents.
- Encourage contiguous, interactive commercial shared parking and other uses.
- Better use of Permitted and Conditional Use process for development.

Goal: Floodplain

- Provide clarity to the Town's existing floodplain and drainage requirements.

Goal: Development South Side of River

- Consider development which is supported by improvements to infrastructure and consistent with local character.

HOUSING ELEMENT

Current Conditions

The most pressing concern in Virgin Town regarding housing is related to the need for quality and affordability. With the housing market currently improving, high ownership rates and low vacancy rates have increased housing costs. Virgin Town's proximity to Zion National Park, limited available land, and the purchase of available housing stock for use as vacation rentals in neighboring towns has added to the increased housing costs.

Desired

Affordability ~ Current and future housing needs to be affordable. The Town may need to review and revise planning, zoning and development regulations to allow adequate supply for a variety of housing types along with programs offered by the State and Federal Government. Housing needs to meet the population needs of varied income levels.

Design, Quality and Maintenance ~ Well maintained and clean neighborhoods are high priority. Housing designs need to be built with quality and maintained.

Adequate Identification ~ Land should be identified for adequate housing sites appropriately zoned with development standards and public services and utilities needed to facilitate high density and residential developments. As Virgin Town develops, the higher density housing (apartments/condominiums) could be considered for use as a buffer between the commercial and residential housing and constructed at a level of one story with a maximum of two stories. Connecting to a potential highway commercial sewer system should be considered and planned for to incorporate this type of housing with its proximity to the highway.

Integration

Goal: Providing Affordable Housing

- Encourage a reasonable mix of housing types in new residential developments. Virgin Town needs affordable housing to encourage young families to stay or move in and to accommodate the middle class and the legacy long-time residents.
- Existing and future infrastructure needs should be addressed in connection with agencies which specifically are directed toward housing developments that assist low and moderate-income families and senior citizen households.

Goal: Quality and Maintenance

- Identify areas for needed housing rehabilitation and maintenance programs. Utilize a variety of available State and Federal Programs which focus on housing rehabilitation for those currently in need. Some of these are the Community Development Block Grants, HOME and Weatherization programs regionally available through the Five County Association of Governments.
- New development should be reasonably complimentary to existing structures, in both scale and architecture.

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- Street patterns and trails within the neighborhoods should be designed to be direct and interconnected to encourage walking and bicycling. (Also mentioned in circulation element)
 - Innovative building methods, materials and styles which meet building standards should be encouraged.

Goal: Adequate Identification of Housing

- Adopting reasonable standards for short-term rentals, high-density housing and clustered unit developments.
- High density housing and clustering to enhance the availability of land for residential development within the frame work of the land use element, zoning and housing element while providing for open space.

Goal: Maintaining Larger Lot

- Limit denser subdividing in the current partially developed, well-established neighborhoods.

(My notes say at the bottom of this page to “maintain current density”)

NOT SURE WHERE IT WAS TO BE INSERTED?

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

Current Conditions

SR-9 connects with Interstate 15 approximately 20 miles to the west and with U.S. 89 approximately 40 miles to the east through Zion National Park. Because it is the main connecting road between the Park and the interstate freeway, it is heavily traveled making it hazardous for pedestrians. The remainder of roads within Town are local in nature, with the exception of the extension of North Kolob Road, which is a County road. Roadways, as in many rural areas, are in need of constant repair and maintenance.

Desired

Safe, Convenient Systems ~ Provide a safe, convenient and efficient system of transporting people and goods to, from, and through the community.

Sheep Bridge Road Improvement ~ Improve Sheep Bridge Road, including the Washington County owned segment from the Virgin Town limits to State Hwy 59, so this road can be considered an alternative all-weather access into Virgin in the foreseeable future.

Shuttle Systems ~ Support the County wide initiative to provide shuttle systems through Virgin to Springdale, creating additional opportunities for visitors to stay in Town and spend their dollars.

Proper Road and Trail Upgrades and Maintenance ~ To maintain and upgrade a viable road and trail system through proper engineering and design standards. When adding new roads to the Towns road system, a corresponding increase in revenue is necessary.

Integration

Goal: Safe, Convenient and Efficient Systems

- Design new roads, trails and sidewalks to provide ease of movement while meeting circulation needs of the community and safety for automobiles, pedestrians, ATVs, bicycle and equestrian modes of transportation.
- Adopt design plans for pedestrians to safely get across SR-9.
- Develop Pocketville Road as a neighborhood type road and not a major thoroughfare.

Goal: Improvements to Sheep Bridge Road

- With the needed improvements to Sheep Bridge Road, the Town of Virgin will have an alternative, all-weather access to State Hwy 59.

Goal: Shuttle Systems

- Future designs to include plans for shuttle systems through Virgin to surrounding areas with multiple stops in Town.
- Combine compatible commercial areas adjacent to shuttle stops and parking areas to capture sales tax revenues from shuttle users.

Goal: Walkable and Friendly

- Walkable neighborhoods for both the commercial and residential areas. Street patterns and trails within the neighborhoods should be designed to be direct and interconnected to also encourage pedestrian and bicycle use.

Goal: Road and Trail Upgrades and Maintenance

- Need to generate a Capital Improvements Transportation Plan relating to street maintenance to set aside yearly amounts to make improvements and for requiring new development connectivity.

ECONOMIC ELEMENT

Current Conditions

At the current time, the Town's financial status is stable. Virgin Town does not have a thriving economic element/economy. Tourist and employment opportunities are limited, yet Virgin Town has the advantage of being located in a high tourist area with some of the most beautiful and spectacular scenery in the world. The Town needs to use its location and resources to its advantage.

Desired

From the public open houses, the desire for several types of commercial area and increased opportunities for employment in Town was recognized. An increased commercial area should be the backbone for growing the economy of Virgin Town. Within commercial areas there would be a new fire station, and a potential information center to welcome visitors along with a city center.

Integration

Goal: Benefiting from Current

To benefit from the current traffic passing through on SR- 9, promote commercial development through the highway corrido.

- Develop the needed infrastructure (utilities; sidewalks) to attract and accommodate new businesses.
- Encourage tourist businesses that serve the types of tourism found in the area. Attention should be given to providing goods and services for users of the Kolob Terrace / Kolob Reservoir / Lava Point areas, BLM land and recreational attractions in the area, all in addition to Zion National Park.
- Establishing the Town as a destination and not just a pass-through community.
- Develop a tourist information center and additional signage welcoming visitors to the Town of Virgin.
- Encourage new families to move to Virgin with affordable housing options, along with securing the sustainability of long term residents.

INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENT

Current Conditions

Current infrastructure does not support the goals and objectives of all other General Plan elements. Infrastructure development will tie everything together.

Although upgrades to water, drainage, roads and town facilities are necessary to support the General Plan, wastewater systems will likely drive the feasibility of the General Plan objectives from all other elements.

The realization of this General Plan objectives, especially for commercial and higher density residential development, depends on cost effective wastewater services.

Although not typical in general plans, the infrastructure element in Virgin's General Plan includes recommendations for infrastructure upgrades. The Town should be aligned on infrastructure development planning and implementation because there will be whole community benefits and impacts for each citizen that receives higher levels of municipal service.

Desired

Cost effective infrastructure development, by developers, that supports all General Plan element objectives.

Continued efforts to enhance municipal services through water, wastewater, drainage and public facilities improvements.

Integration

Goal: Ordinances

Strengthen ordinances which clearly define that new developments must maintain and manage existing natural and established drainage features.

Goal: Infrastructure Support

Provide infrastructure support for potentially higher density residential development adjacent to the commercial zone.

Goal: Enhance Water System Infrastructures

Enhance water system infrastructure that supports the land use and other Virgin General Plan elements. Incorporate existing, but under-utilized, Town water resources such as springs, wells and water rights.